

PERSONAL REFERENCE AND POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN FRENCH AND
SPANISH: A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH

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CONTENTS

List of Tables	5
Acknowledgements	2
Abstract	10
Introduction	11
1. Theories of communication	16
1.0 Introduction	16
1.1 L-pragmatic arguments	20
1.1.1 Speech Act Theory	20
1.1.2 Deixis	23
1.1.3 Reference	24
1.1.4 Presupposition	25
1.2 P-pragmatic arguments	27
1.2.2 Grice's theory of implicature	27
1.2.3 Leech's Principles of Pragmatics	30
1.2.3 Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory	31
1.3 O-pragmatic arguments	38
1.3.1 Ethnomethodology and Conversational Analysis	38
1.3.2 The Ethnography of Speaking	44
1.4 Universality versus cultural-specificity and second language learning	46
1.5 Conclusion	51
Notes	53
2. A model for the analysis of pronominal usage	55
2.0 Introduction	56
2.1 The pronominal system	61
2.1.1 Person [\pm speaker] [\pm hearer]	

[± third person]	66
2.1.2 Number [± minimal group]	67
2.1.3 Gender [± masculine]	68
2.2 Usage	71
2.2.1 Generic and specific usage [± generic]	71
2.2.1 Other aspects of usage	75
2.3 Indeterminacy	77
2.3.1 Indeterminacy in French	81
2.3.2 Indeterminacy in Spanish	83
2.4 Conclusion	88
Notes	90
3. Selection and description of data	93
3.0 Introduction	93
3.1 Selection of data	93
3.2 Description of data	101
3.2.1 Editorial meeting - <i>Lyon Matin</i>	102
3.2.2 Editorial meeting - <i>Radio Cadena</i>	104
3.2.3 Editorial meeting - <i>El Norte de Castilla</i>	105
3.2.4 Editorial meeting - <i>El Norte de Castilla</i>	105
3.2.5 Editorial meeting - <i>El Norte de Castilla</i>	106
3.3 Transcription of the data	106
3.4 Analysis of the data: quantitative and qualitative methodologies	109
3.5 Conclusion	113
Notes	115
4. Analysis of personal pronominal reference in a corpus of naturally-occurring spoken French:	

[JE] [NOUS] [TU] [VOUS].	117
4.0 Introduction	117
4.1 The use of [JE]	124
4.1.1 Introduction	124
4.1.2 Hedges	129
4.1.3 'Quality' hedges	134
(i) Concluding remarks	138
4.1.4 'Attitude' hedges	139
4.1.5 'Performative' hedges	146
4.1.6 The use of [JE] with a main verb	151
4.1.7 Concluding remarks	153
4.2 The use of [NOUS]	155
4.2.1 [NOUS] in subject position	157
4.2.2 [NOUS] <i>de modestie</i>	159
4.2.3 [NOUS] in non-subject position	164
4.2.4 Concluding remarks	168
4.3 The use of [TU]	169
4.3.1 Introduction	169
4.3.2 The use of [TU] in the corpus	173
(i) The use of [TU] for specific reference	173
(ii) The use of [TU] for generic reference	176
4.3.3 Concluding remarks	185
4.4 The use of [VOUS]	186
4.4.1 Introduction	186
4.4.2 Specific reference	188
(i) Plural [VOUS]	188
(ii) Singular [VOUS]	189

(iii) Singular/plural [VOUS]	190
4.4.3 Generic reference	195
4.4.4 Concluding remarks	197
4.5 Conclusion	198
Notes	203
5. Analysis of personal pronominal reference in a corpus of naturally-occurring spoken French: [ON] and impersonals.	204
5.0 Introduction	204
5.1 Syntactic, lexical and discourse indicators of the referent of [ON]	207
5.1.1 Co-reference	208
5.1.2 Temporal indicators of genericity/ specificity	214
5.1.3 Implicative constructions	219
5.1.4 Repair	221
5.1.5 Conclusion	226
5.2 Extra-linguistic contextual indicators of the referent of [ON]	227
5.2.1 Knowledge of past actions	228
(i) [ON] = self-reference	229
(ii) [ON] = other-reference	230
5.2.2 Knowledge of status and participant roles	231
5.2.3 Concluding remarks	235
5.3 Politeness phenomena as indicators of the referent of [ON]	236
5.3.0 Introduction	236
5.3.1 Example 1	238

5.3.2 Example 2	241
5.3.3 Example 3	245
5.3.4 Example 4	250
5.3.5 Example 5	253
5.3.6 Example 6	256
5.3.7 Example 7	258
5.3.8 Example 8	260
5.3.9 Concluding remarks	264
5.4 Impersonals	266
5.5 Conclusion	276
6. Analysis of personal pronominal reference in a corpus of naturally-occurring Spanish	278
6.0 Introduction	278
6.1 Presence or absence of the pronoun	280
6.1.1 Disambiguation	281
6.1.2 Emphasis and contrast	284
6.1.3 The verb type	287
6.1.4 Concluding remarks	290
6.2 The Spanish pronominal system	291
6.2.1 [YO]	293
6.2.2 [NOSOTROS/AS]	293
6.2.3 [TÚ]	293
6.2.4 [VD.]	294
6.2.5 [VOSOTROS/AS]	294
6.2.6 [VDS.]	294
6.2.7 [UNO/A]	295
6.2.8 [SE]	296

6.2.9 Impersonals	298
6.3 Analysis of the Spanish data	298
6.3.1 [YO]	299
6.3.2 [NOSOTROS/AS]	313
6.3.3 [TÚ]	324
(i) Corroborative and contrastive uses of [TÚ]	326
a) Corroborative use of [TÚ]	327
b) Contrastive use of [TÚ]	329
(ii) Directives	331
a) The imperative	333
b) The present tense declarative	340
(iii) Generic use of [TÚ]	345
6.3.4 [VD.] [VDS.] [VOSOTROS/AS]	354
6.3.5 [UNO/A]	356
6.3.6 [SE]	360
6.3.7 Impersonals	366
6.4 Conclusion	372
Notes	379
7. Conclusions and further implications	380
7.0 Introduction	380
7.1 Summary of findings	380
7.2 Relationship between findings in French and Spanish	382
7.3 Implications for foreign language learning	388
7.4 Methodological difficulties	389
7.5 Concluding remarks	392
Bibliography	395

LIST OF TABLES

Diagram 1 The French personal pronominal system	70
Diagram 2 The Spanish personal pronominal system	71
Diagram 3 Usage of the French pronominal system	76
Diagram 4 Usage of the Spanish pronominal system	76
Table 1 Personal reference by subject pronoun	123
Table 2 Personal reference by all subject pronouns (excluding [ON])	123
Table 3 [JE] and type of verb	129
Table 4 'Quality' hedges	134
Table 5 'Attitude' hedges	139
Table 6 'Performative' hedges	145

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to examine personal pronominal reference in two languages, French and Spanish, from an interactional perspective. Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) 'Politeness theory' seeks to provide an explanation for much of the mismatch between what is 'said' and what is 'implicated' in spoken discourse. One area of speech where this mismatch is particularly evident is that of personal reference where extralinguistic information is paramount in its use and interpretation. While previous approaches to this area have sought to assign one interpretation to a given pronominal use, this study seeks to show how speakers and hearers can exploit a multiplicity of potential values in the interest of face-protection. Based on a qualitative methodology derived from the field of linguistic pragmatics applied to a corpus of naturally-occurring data of speech situations where there is threat to the face of speakers and hearers, this study will argue that the contextual factors of power and status as well as a knowledge of linguistic politeness itself are of crucial importance in the use and interpretation of personal reference.

INTRODUCTION

In the nineteen seventies a major new dimension was added to language acquisition theory with the introduction, by Dell Hymes (1972), of the concept of 'communicative competence' to refer to the ability of the competent native speaker not only to speak with formal grammatical accuracy but also with social appropriacy.

The impetus behind the present study came from the increasing awareness amongst teachers of foreign languages of the need to enable learners to gain communicative competence in the target language. While for most languages there are multiple grammars of usage of the grammatical system in question, as yet the grammar of use has received little attention. Indeed, Wolfson (1989:4) suggests that there is much work to be done in the area of empirically-based sociolinguistic analyses of the varieties of language used by speakers of English and other languages 'before it is possible to give a truly accurate account of the linguistic features appropriate to the many contexts in which speakers interact'. While there is a rapidly growing and multidisciplinary body of theoretical work in the area loosely described as linguistic pragmatics (see Chapter 1), there is much work

still to be done in testing pragmatic concepts against naturally-occurring language data.

The aim of this thesis is to examine a restricted area of language use, that of personal pronominal reference, in two Romance languages, French and Spanish, and to investigate how politeness theory as developed by Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) can be applied to actual language data. Personal pronominal reference is of particular interest because it concerns the way in which participants in a speech situation relate to each other in the furtherance of their goals and, being a deictic category, its interpretation is highly dependent on the context of utterance.

The main areas of pronominal use and usage to have received investigation so far have been that of the T/V distinction (Brown and Gilman (1960), Lambert and Tucker (1976), etc.) and, in the case of Spanish, the presence or absence of the personal subject pronoun (Enríquez, 1984, Barrenechea and Alonso, 1973, etc.). The T/V distinction is an area of language use which clearly responds to extra-linguistic factors and, in particular, to the notions of power and distance. However, while this distinction is of considerable interest, the choice of pronoun is relatively static and does not respond to the ongoing interactional context but rather encodes a given

interpersonal relationship. What is clear is that the pronominal systems of the languages studied provide a range of choices for a speaker to convey the same personal reference while exploiting the degree of determinacy offered by a given pronoun in the interests of linguistic politeness. Thus this study, unlike previous work in this area (Lavandera, 1982, Laberge and Sankoff, 1979, Haverkate 1984)), seeks to investigate the range of reference afforded by the use of a given pronoun and to show how speakers and hearers can exploit the presence of multiple simultaneous interpretations in the interest of face protection. To this end we use not only naturally-occurring language data but recordings of speech situations where there is an element of threat to face.

The study will focus on two main areas: (1) the extralinguistic knowledge needed by the speaker and hearer to use and interpret pronominal reference; and (2) the role of indeterminacy as a linguistic resource which can be exploited in the interests of linguistic politeness. The study will show the importance of extra-linguistic (in particular, knowledge of role and status of the speaker) rather than linguistic knowledge in assigning an interpretation to a given use of a pronoun and show how a knowledge of politeness strategies themselves can form part of this extralinguistic knowledge. Indeed, the interpretation not only of the referent of a given pronoun

but also of its illocutionary force depends on an assessment of these extralinguistic factors. The study will also show how speakers exploit the degree of indeterminacy afforded to them by a given pronoun for the establishment and maintenance of relations with a hearer.

It is hoped that the results of the research will provide a small contribution towards a sociolinguistic grammar of these languages and will contribute to the development of teaching materials aimed at enabling advanced learners to 'do things with language' (Austin, 1962).

Chapter One will examine issues relating to the analysis of the spoken language and in particular linguistic pragmatics. It will include a discussion of the contribution of politeness theories to the analysis of interaction and more specifically to the question of personal reference.

Chapter Two will focus on problems of definition of personal reference both formally and semantically.

Chapter Three will outline the methods used to collect the corpora of data for this study, describe the database, discuss the transcription procedures adopted and review the issues relating to quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Chapter Four will examine the use of personal pronominal reference in the corpus of French data and investigate the contribution of politeness theories to language use.

Chapter Five will concentrate primarily on the French impersonal pronoun [ON] and also on impersonal constructions in general and examine how these function as an interactional resource.

Chapter Six will examine the use of personal (and elements of impersonal) reference in the Spanish corpus and will argue that politeness theory can contribute to the understanding of the issue of the presence or absence of the pronoun.

The conclusion will summarise the main results of the research as well as suggest some refinements to politeness theories currently available. There will be a brief review of the implications of this study for language teaching.

CHAPTER ONE THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION

1.0 Introduction

In addition to Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) 'politeness theory', this thesis will draw on those theoretical constructs from the areas of discourse analysis, conversational analysis and the ethnography of speech which can be broadly grouped under the heading of pragmatics (1). Fasold (1990:119) defines pragmatics as 'the study of the use of context to make inferences about meaning'. Leech (1983:6) distinguishes between semantics and pragmatics saying that the former asks the question 'What does X mean?' whereas pragmatics deals with the question 'What did you mean by X?'. He states 'Thus meaning in pragmatics is defined relative to the speaker or user of a language, whereas meaning in semantics is defined purely as a property of expressions in a given language, in abstraction from particular situations, speakers and hearers'. A pragmatic approach entails a shift in perspective from the concerns of semantics, for example the concern with the sentence as 'an abstract theoretical entity defined within a theory of grammar' (Levinson 1983:18) to the study of the utterance and of how meanings are constructed, negotiated and interpreted in context.

Insofar as the focus of this study is that of personal pronominal reference, which falls within the linguistic category of deixis (see 1.1 (i)), the pragmatic dimension of language use is paramount. For, 'by deixis is meant the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred to, in relation to the spatiotemporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it, typically, of a single speaker and at least one addressee'. (Lyons: 1977b:637). Thus a crucial element of context are the deictic roles of the participants.

The aim of this Chapter is to review the pragmatic considerations relevant to our study of personal pronominal reference from speech act theory through Grice to conversational analysis, while Chapter Two will seek to take a formal/semantic approach to the two language systems under study. This two-fold approach should provide a methodological framework for an analysis of how a semantically or formally defined category of linguistic items (personal pronouns) can function pragmatically in naturally-occurring discourse.

Brown and Levinson, in their introduction to the 1987 edition of a work they had already published some nine years earlier, 'Politeness: some universals in language usage', state that their 'theory argues for a shift in

emphasis from the current preoccupation with speaker identity, to a focus on dyadic patterns of verbal interaction as the expression of social relationships; and from the emphasis on the usage of linguistic forms, to an emphasis on the relation between form and complex inference' (1987:2). They go on to argue that 'a great deal of the mismatch between what is 'said' and what is 'implicated' can be attributed to politeness'. It might be assumed from Brown and Levinson's title that if politeness is essentially a universal phenomenon then students of a given language should be able to extrapolate from their native-speaker competence to bridge any cultural gaps. However, Canale (1983:8) comments that 'there are no doubt universal aspects of appropriate language use that need not be relearned to communicate appropriately in the foreign language (...) But there are language-specific aspects too'. Leech (1983:29) gives an example of a language specific aspect when he gives the Portuguese request form:

Será que você consertaria este relógio?
 poderia consertar

Will it be that you would/could mend this watch?

Here, while both English and Portuguese may share the same strategy for encoding politeness, that of conventional

indirectness, the structures used in Portuguese would not be appropriate in English. Thus a learner of Portuguese would need to know the linguistic structures available and commonly used to encode indirectness in this particular language.

Brown and Levinson's work is situated amongst a body of work (Lakoff 1973, Leech 1983), written from a Gricean perspective, which propounds a rationalist motivation for the principles, maxims or rules adhered to in ordinary conversation. This approach belongs to one strand of the disparate approaches which make up pragmatics and which can be grouped into three main areas which Wilson (1990:4) refers to as L-, P- and O-pragmatic arguments:

I want to suggest that we have three types of pragmatically based argument: the L-pragmatic argument, i.e. one which focuses only on how contextual meaning is encoded in the language system; the P-pragmatic argument, an account based on rules or general principles of behaviour, which although generally reflected in the linguistic system may be found beyond this; and the O-pragmatic argument, where meaning is constructed through the orderly negotiation of talk within contexts.

Although these are not watertight categories, it will be useful to look at speech act theory, deixis and presupposition as L-pragmatic arguments. The important point here is that contextual inferencing is made on the basis of the language choices, whether structural or lexical, made by the speaker. Gricean implicature, Leech's Politeness Principle and Brown and Levinson's politeness

theory can be defined as P-pragmatic arguments in the sense that they propose motivations, rules and strategies for interaction which account for language use where form does not (necessarily) map onto function. Finally, there are ethnomethodology and the ethnography of speech which may be considered as O-pragmatic arguments which focus on how participants themselves use language to manage interaction itself.

1.1 L-pragmatic arguments

1.1.1 Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory, based on a concept originally introduced by Austin (1962) and subsequently developed by Searle (1969, 1976) and numerous other scholars, is fundamental to the theory of pragmatics. It arose out of concern that certain functions of language were being neglected by linguists. Language was now viewed as a resource which could be used by speakers to 'do' things as well as to make true-false statements about the world.

Austin (2) observed that while some utterances were used to make statements (constatives), others (performatives) were used to perform actions, for example, of apologizing, betting, warning or naming ships. A litmus test for the presence of a performative in English would be the ability

to insert the adverb 'hereby' before the performative verb, for example, 'I hereby request that this meeting be adjourned'. However, not in all circumstances would the uttering of a performative have the desired effect upon the world. Levinson (1983:229) gives the example for a British husband who says to his wife:

I hereby divorce you

Within British society, the uttering of such a sentence has no legal status and cannot, thereby, obtain a divorce (unlike certain Muslim countries where, under, certain conditions, Levinson suggests this to be the case). In such circumstances, Austin would argue that the 'felicity conditions' (3) that performatives must meet if they are to succeed, have not in fact been met.

Austin then widens his theory out from a simple distinction between performatives and constatives to a much more wide-ranging theory of language whereby utterances, in addition to their semantic meaning (locutionary act), perform specific linguistic actions such as requesting, ordering, promising or apologizing (illocutionary act). The response (perlocutionary act) to the illocutionary act may vary insofar as the hearer may or may not act upon the perceived illocutionary force of the speaker's utterance in the way the speaker intended.

Searle (1976) builds on Austin's work to provide a categorization of speech acts into five types of utterances: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives. However, leaving aside clear-cut cases of performative verbs, there are numerous difficulties in identifying what particular function(s) any given utterance is fulfilling. For while linguistic categories such as imperatives, interrogatives and declaratives may coincide with the illocutionary force of an utterance there is frequently a mismatch. As Hymes observes (in Wolfson 1989:6) 'a sentence interrogative in form may be now a request, now a command, now a statement; a request may be manifested by a sentence that is now interrogative, now declarative, now imperative in form; and one and the same sentence may be taken as a promise or a threat, depending on the norm of interaction applied to it'. A further complication arises related to Searle's claim that the constitutive rules (4) for speech acts are universal. Kreckel's (1981:43-60) critique of Searle argues that these rules are not conventional and universal like the rules of a chess game but rather that 'what counts as (for example) a "warning" depends on rules evolved and sustained in concrete interaction within social groups' (Kreckel 1981:60). In Brown and Levinson's (1987:10) revised introduction, they express a number of reservations about speech act theory, an acknowledged influence on their work, recognising that 'utterances are

often equivocal in force' and looking towards conversational analysis as, potentially, a more powerful tool of analysis.

1.1.2 Deixis

Deixis is concerned with the spatio-temporal coordinates, or the 'here-and-now' of a speech situation (see Lyons 1977b, Chapter 15). Speakers need to refer to and hearers need to know about participants, location, time and other contextual variables of a speech event before they can utter or interpret, for example:

1. Ecoute, on est en réunion là
2. Pásame este papel

For example, to interpret 1 the analyst may need to know who is in the meeting, where and when it is being held, who is speaking to whom for what purpose. In example 2, in addition to knowing about the participants, the analyst needs to know what paper is referred to by the speaker as *este papel*.

Lyons (1977b:637-8) argues that the most basic function of the grammatical category of person is deictic rather than anaphoric and that this deixis is both spatial and

temporal. For utterances are essentially egocentric, with the current speaker being the point of reference. When speakers change, the point of reference changes over both space and time to another speaker who now determines the here-and-now of the utterance.

What is of interest in this study is, that while personal pronominal reference makes up a 'closed set' (see Lyons, 1981) in human languages, that is, that there is a fixed number of pronominal forms, different language systems are non-isomorphic in the sense that they divide up this reality differently. Indeed, Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990:9) observe that 'there are languages with a mere handful of pronouns and others with as many as two hundred'. Thus a learner of a foreign language will always be faced with the task of acquiring the linguistic and the sociocultural knowledge necessary to be able to manipulate this new system.

1.1.3 Reference

In dealing with reference from a pragmatic perspective it is important to note that linguistic items do not in themselves refer to the outside world but rather they are exploited by speakers for this function. As Searle puts it (1979:155) 'expressions do not refer any more than they make promises or give orders'. Therefore speakers select

from the range of personal pronouns available to them to refer to themselves and others in speech. Other devices they may use include naming (e.g. 'your mother says...'), indefinites (e.g. 'someone hasn't...') and honorifics (e.g. 'Mr. Chairman') (5).

1.1.4 Presupposition

Presupposition, like reference, is a property of the speaker and is 'what is taken by the speaker to be the common ground of the participants in the conversation' (Stalnaker quoted in Brown and Yule, 1983:29). For example, in the following question:

¿Cuánto crees que va a durar la huelga?

it is presupposed that there is a strike at the time of speaking and that it will last until some time in the future (assuming that the propositions contained within the utterance are themselves true) and that the interlocutor is aware of its existence and is in a position to estimate its likely duration, etc..

Presupposition has proved a controversial area (see Levinson, Chapter 4); however, what is clear is that it is extremely sensitive to the beliefs and knowledge of speakers and hearers. Levinson (1983:187-8) quotes Karttunen's (1973) (concocted) examples:

If the Vice-Chancellor invites Simone de Beauvoir to dinner he'll regret having invited a feminist to dinner.

If the Vice-Chancellor invites the U.S. President to dinner, he'll regret having invited a feminist to his table.

He argues that background knowledge and not the linguistic properties of these two statements lead us presuppose in the first instance that 'Simone de Beauvoir' and 'a feminist' are in fact co-referential whereas, in the second example we presuppose that 'a feminist' is not co-referential with 'the U.S. President' (assuming that the president is the one in power at the time of writing and not in fact a feminist) and that the feminist has already been invited. Fasold (1990:168) gives the example of:

Vous êtes le professeur
(You (V form) are the professor)

Here the choice of the V form (provided that it is appropriately used) can presuppose that the addressee is either non-solidary with or more powerful than the speaker (see Brown and Gilman, 1961). Within Gricean theory (1961, 1975) this would be referred to as 'conventional implicature'.

What is important to note about the L-pragmatic arguments described above is the extent of extra-linguistic knowledge required by both speaker and hearer in using linguistic cues in communication. In focusing on

pronominal reference in this study it will be important to investigate the effectiveness of L-pragmatic arguments in accounting for pronominal use.

1.2 P-pragmatic arguments

As suggested above, these theories all concern principles of behaviour which are argued to motivate speakers to select and interpret the linguistic resources available in a given language in relation to their interactional goals.

1.2.1 Grice's theory of implicature

Grice (6) addressed the fundamental question of the frequent mismatch between form and function in conversation and outlined a series of principles of behaviour underlying efficient communication. He propounds an overriding principle, the Cooperative Principle (CP) which accounts for the orderliness and efficiency of communication and which he (Grice, 1975:45) defines as:

Make your conversational contribution as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

He supports this principle with four categories of maxims (Grice 1975 in Levinson 1983:101):

The maxim of Quality

try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

- i. do not say what you believe to be false.
- ii. do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

The maxim of Quantity

- i. make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange.
- ii. do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The maxim of Relevance

- i. make your contributions relevant

The maxim of Manner

be perspicuous, and specifically:

- i. avoid obscurity of expression
- ii. avoid ambiguity
- iii. be brief
- iv. be orderly

Therefore, in order to be maximally efficient, a speaker should formulate a message as intelligibly as possible and introduce it at a relevant point in a conversation with the aim of ensuring that the hearer immediately and fully understands it. Speakers can and frequently do appear to violate these 'rules' of conversation. For example, a variety of responses could be made to the following question:

A: How many cigarettes have you smoked today?

B1: Twenty three.

B2: None!

B3: Not many.

B4: Have you seen today's news?

B5: Fewer than I would have if I'd gone out.

Assuming that B1 is a maximally efficient reply, B2 flouts the maxim of Quality, being a lie, B3 flouts the maxim of Quantity as insufficient information is given, B4 flouts the maxim of Relevance because the speaker does not answer the question and B5 mainly flouts the maxim of Manner because it is neither brief nor clear.

It is here that Grice combines the CP with the notion of 'conversational implicature' whereby the hearer calls on his or her world knowledge and knowledge about the assumptions which underly verbal interaction to infer the meaning the speaker has intended to convey. Levinson (1983:104), in this connection, cites the following example:

A: I am out of petrol

B: There's a garage round the corner

In such instances the hearer (B) assumes that the speaker (A) is upholding the CP and that the response does not violate the Relevance maxim. Thus world knowledge leads to the inference that there is a garage close by which is open and which sells petrol.

There have been a number of attempts to refine Gricean theory to take account of the importance of language use in the establishment and maintenance of relationships

between speakers, the most prominent of which being Leech's 'Principles of Pragmatics' (1983) and Brown and Levinson's 'Politeness' (1978, 1987) (7).

1.2.2 Leech's Principles of Pragmatics

Leech takes as his starting point the validity but insufficiency of Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) insofar as it is so frequently flouted by speakers. He introduces a Politeness Principle (PP) which he characterizes as: 'Minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs' (Leech, 1983:81). The corollary of this, but of less importance, is to maximize the expression of polite beliefs. He gives the following example of where the PP overrides the CP.

A: We'll all miss Bill and Agatha, won't we

B: Well, we'll all miss BILL.

Here the implicature is arrived at (that B will not miss Agatha) on the grounds that the speaker has not fulfilled the maxim of Quantity because this has been overridden by the PP: the speaker minimized expression of impolite beliefs. To the PP, Leech attaches a number of maxims: primarily those of tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy (8) which may operate differently

in different societies. This approach has been criticised, not for the introduction of a politeness principle itself (Brown and Levinson 1987, Taylor & Cameron, 1987), but for its proliferation of maxims and for making observance of the PP into an interactional goal in its own right.

1.3.4 Brown and Levinson's Politeness theory

In her 1973 paper 'The logic of politeness', Lakoff had established two sets of rules for pragmatic competence. These were 'rules of clarity' which broadly corresponded to Gricean maxims; and 'rules of politeness' of which Lakoff identified three:

1. Don't impose
2. Give options
3. Make A feel good - be friendly

She suggested that where it is not possible to combine politeness with clarity, politeness will generally take precedence. Insofar as these rules suggest a respect for and esteem of the addressee, they are very similar in their essence to the more sophisticated theory of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). Indeed, the crucial difference between their approach and those of Lakoff and Leech is that Brown and Levinson adopt a strategic rather than a rule-based view of politeness,

attempting to uncover universal motivations rather than culture-specific norms.

Brown and Levinson start with the assumption that a competent speaker ('Model Person') is a rational being, capable of ends-means reasoning. They adopt Goffman's (1967) notion of 'face', that is 'the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself' (1987:61) and distinguish between

- a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction - i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition
- b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants (1987:62)

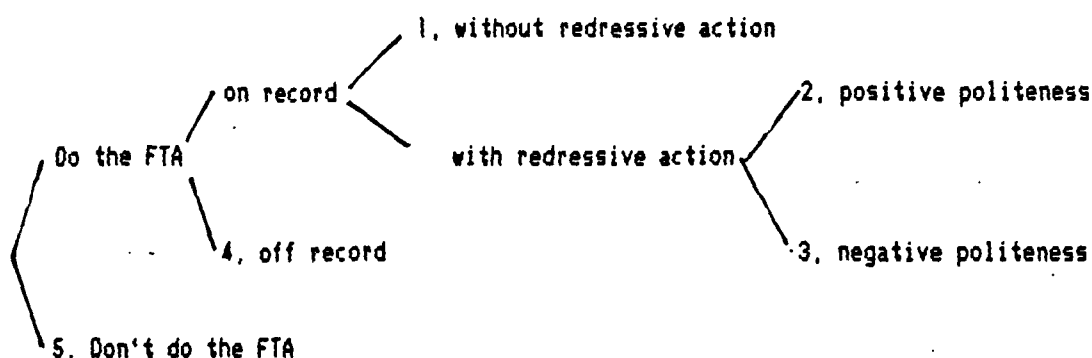
They then introduce the notion of 'face-threatening acts' (FTAs) which they classify according to the type of face primarily threatened (positive or negative) and to the role of the participant (speaker (S) or hearer (H)). Acts that threaten H's negative face include: orders, requests, reminders, threats and warnings. Those that threaten H's positive face include: disapproval, criticism, ridicule, disagreements and challenges. Acts that threaten S's negative face include: expressing thanks, making excuses and accepting offers. Those that threaten S's positive

face include: apologies, acceptance of a compliment, confessions of responsibility or guilt.

Schmidt (1980), in his review of Brown and Levinson (1978), criticizes their view as being 'overly pessimistic and rather paranoid', a view where communication is seen as being a 'fundamentally dangerous and antagonistic behaviour' (Kaspar, 1990:194). In particular, there has been criticism of Brown and Levinson's classification of thanks, apologies and compliments as face-threatening acts and the suggestion that they should be reclassified as 'face-supportive acts' (Edmondson (1981), Holmes (1986, 1988). Brown and Levinson counter this type of criticism in the introduction to the 1987 edition, pointing out that these acts would need to be classified in terms of the weightiness given to them in a particular culture. Thus in a given culture a compliment might be perceived, *ceteris paribus*, as a positive politeness strategy or as a threat to the addressee's negative face. However, all other things are rarely equal in naturally-occurring discourse and variables such as those identified by Brown and Levinson (power, distance) may lead to what are essentially equivocal acts being interpreted in a variety of ways. Thus, one line of argument in this thesis will be that an utterance (for example, a compliment) cannot be seen as being either face-threatening or face-supportive

in itself but rather that its interpretation lies in extralinguistic factors.

Brown and Levinson provide a classification of a number of strategies which a speaker may adopt to minimize threat either to H or to S. They are summarized in the schema below:



Brown and Levinson (1987:69)

Brown and Levinson take a cost-benefit approach to the selection of the appropriate strategy, having developed a hierarchy of strategies as numbered above. To take out a 'maximum insurance policy' and use the higher numbered strategies where not warranted by the gravity of the FTA would involve unnecessary effort and loss of clarity and suggest that the FTA is more serious than it actually is. For example, the utterance 'Look, I'm really terribly sorry, you know I borrowed your car, well I've had a bit of a problem with it...' is more likely to lead the hearer to think that the car has something (seriously) wrong with it rather than that the speaker has not found an ideal

parking space for it. Thus it is in the interests of the speaker to fine-tune any redress made to protect face.

In order to compute the weightiness of a given FTA Brown and Levinson adopt the explanatory factors of Power (P) and Distance (D) which had already played a crucial role in Brown and Gilman's (1961) (9) seminal study on the use of pronominal reference (T and V). They add to these the ranking (R) of a given imposition in a given culture. For example, cigarettes might be classified as a 'free good' in Spain (i.e. an item which people feel entitled to ask for or just to take from others) and a 'non-free good' in British society (where individuals consider that it is an imposition, and therefore a threat to the hearer's negative face, to ask for a cigarette). Thus, assuming equality of P and D, a British English speaker may feel more constrained than a Spanish one to pay attention to H's face when requesting the gift of a cigarette. Thus the weightiness (W) of a given FTA (x) is assessed by Brown and Levinson (1987:76) as follows:

$$\frac{W}{x} = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + \frac{R}{x}$$

where W stands for the weight of a given act (x) and is equal to the Distance between Speaker and Hearer plus the

relative Ranking of that act (x) within a specific culture.

The body of Brown and Levinson's work is then devoted to examining in detail each of the super-strategies identified above, charting a variety of sub-strategies and illustrating these with examples from British and American English, Tzeltal and Tamil with the aim of demonstrating their universality (10).

The strategy of bald-on-record is broadly adopted where the potential threat to face (caused, say, by the use of imperatives as directives) is overridden by a need for efficiency, for example in warnings such as 'Look out, a car's coming' or where the speech act is in the interest of H such as in 'Have some more cake' or 'Come in'.

Threat to face can be minimised through positive and negative politeness strategies which include, in the case of positive politeness, use of in-group identity markers (here Brown and Levinson mention the choice of the familiar second person pronoun or T form in those languages where this option is available), point-of-view operations where the speaker may adopt wholly or partly the point of view of the hearer (for example the use of the first person singular pronoun 'we' used to refer to the addressee, in, say, an exchange between doctor and

patient: 'Have we taken our medicine?'; use by S of the second person pronoun, e.g. 'you know' when referring to S's own experiences; inclusion of both S and H in an activity which really involves only S or H (e.g. 'give us a break' where S uses the first person plural pronoun for self-reference), etc.

Negative politeness strategies include a variety of indirectness mechanisms including hedges (11) addressed at Gricean maxims. Conventional indirectness includes the use of modal verbs such as 'Could you pass me the salt?' Such requests may also contain adverbial hedges, for example, 'Could you possibly...' Similarly, the use of 'I think...' may function as a hedge on the quality of an utterance suggesting, among other things, that a speaker is not taking full responsibility for the truth of it. Other strategies include giving deference (this would include use of the 'polite' second person or V pronoun and of honorifics), impersonalizing S and H (using impersonal constructions such as *il faut que...* and *es necesario que...* (it is necessary that...)), pluralization of the 'you' and 'I' pronouns (the authorial 'we', for example).

Off-record strategies involve the violation of one or more of Grice's maxims and include giving association clues such as 'You know my mother's coming' which could encode a

request to clean the flat, wash the car, etc., understating ('That dress is quite nice' to mean not particularly nice), rhetorical questions ('Just why would I have done that?' to suggest that S has not carried out a certain action), etc.

Of the different approaches to conversational inference and politeness reviewed above, Brown and Levinson's appears to cast the greatest light on issues of personal reference. Not only do they locate personal reference within the strategies they claim to be universal but they also adduce politeness as a motivation for some of the linguistic forms encoded in different languages (e.g. pluralization and use of honorifics as V pronouns) (12).

1.3 O-pragmatic arguments

These theories are primarily concerned with the organization of interaction as a human activity.

(1) Ethnomethodology and conversational analysis

The ethnomethodological (13) approach to the study of conversation has its roots more firmly in sociology than in linguistics and investigates the tacit rules known to participants which enable them to participate effectively in speech activities. Ethnomethodologists, or

conversational analysts, use a 'practical reasoning' approach whereby participants are aware of the 'rules' of conversation, can choose whether or not to conform to them and are 'accountable' to those with whom they are interacting. What is more, interaction is seen as both responding to the immediate and wider context and also to shaping context or (as Heritage (1989:22) puts it), is 'context-renewing'. While it is recognised that speakers and hearers do not have access to their interlocutors' intentions and assumptions, interactants work together on the assumption that they share common ground until differences become manifest in conversation, and then they work interactionally to resolve these. The ethnomethodological approach is highly empirical, deriving its categories of classification from corpora of naturally-occurring conversation. Intuitive and elicited data is eschewed insofar as language is seen as 'a vehicle for the living of real lives with real interests in the real world' (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977:381). One implication of this approach is that a further function language can fulfill is that of managing the process of conversation or 'interactional work' itself. Another is that as speakers and hearers are constantly negotiating meaning on the basis of their own assumptions and intentions, which may or may not coincide, it is often only when miscommunication becomes apparent that these assumptions and intentions become explicit. Indeed, one

particularly fruitful area of research has been that of intergroup communication (see Gumperz 1982, Tannen 1986, 1990) where language miscommunication arises between different social and ethnic groups and between men and women.

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), in their seminal paper 'A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking in conversation', introduced the notions of 'turn-taking' and of 'adjacency pairs'. They argue that there must be an underlying set of rules which enable participants in a conversation to contribute to it in an orderly fashion. They identify the 'turn-constructive unit' which is to be identified by linguistic means. The end of this unit is marked by a transition relevance place (TRP). When a TRP is reached, the current speaker may select another speaker to continue or another speaker may self-select. If no other party speaks then the current speaker may, if desired, continue speaking. However, for such a system to function smoothly, the TRPs need to be 'projectable'. There has been considerable research into the factors determining the projectability of TRPs, an activity which speakers are able to do with a high degree of sophistication whether in each other's presence or over the telephone. The economy of turn-taking has implications for the functions of language used by speakers. For example, repetition and increase in amplitude are two

devices that speakers can use to compete for a turn. The repetition of personal pronouns in turn-initial positions in a bid to gain the floor, eg.

Je je je je crois que

has implications for the choice of methodology to be adopted for analysing pronominal reference (see Chapter 3.4).

The other key notion in Conversational Analysis is that of 'adjacency pairs'. Levinson (1983:303) summarizes Schegloff and Sacks' characterization of these as follows:

adjacency pairs are sequences of two utterances that are:

- (i) adjacent
- (ii) produced by different speakers
- (iii) ordered as a first part and a second part
- (iv) typed, so that a particular first part requires a particular second (or range of second parts) - e.g. offers require acceptances or rejections, greetings require greetings, and so on

The second part need not immediately succeed the first part if there is an 'insertion sequence'. Levinson (1983:304) gives an example from Merrit (1976:333)

A: May I have a bottle of Mich? ((Q1))

B: Are you twenty one? ((Q2))

A: No ((A2))

A: No ((A1))

Furthermore, not all second parts are of equal standing. In terms of markedness, there is at least one 'preferred' and one 'dispreferred' second part to each first part. The dispreferred second parts may display delay, markers of their dispreferred status such as 'uh' or 'well' and some account of why the preferred second cannot be provided. Levinson (1983:308) gives the following example from Wootton:

C: Um I wondered if there's any chance of seeing you tomorrow
sometime (0.5) morning or before the seminar
(1.0)
R: Ah um (.) I doubt it
C: Uhm huh
R: The reason is I'm seeing Elizabeth

While ethnomethodologists see a purely structural basis for preference organization, their approach has been criticised by Levinson (14) for being exclusively structural; other factors are involved, for example politeness. Individuals may genuinely prefer to respond positively to an invitation or request, to agree with a speaker, etc. Thus, the markers surrounding the dispreferred response could be attributed to face-saving efforts on the part of the speaker.

CA also looks at a series of turns called 'pre-sequences' which may precede an invitation, a request, an announcement, etc., for example:

A: Whatcha doin'?

B: Nothin'

A: Wanna drink?

Atkinson and Drew, 1979 in Levinson 1983:346

These too can have their basis in politeness insofar as they can alert the hearer to the force of the speaker's next turn. If the speaker is about to make a request, they can allow the hearer to make a seemingly spontaneous offer, enhancing his or her own face or to signal the likelihood of non-compliance, thus saving the face of the hearer who will now avoid direct rejection. In the following example the speaker D uses pre-sequences to avoid telling a friend about a third-party's death.

D: I-I-I had something terrible t'tell you
So / / uh

R: How terrible *is* it?

D: Uh, th- as worse it could be
(0.8)

R: W- y'mean Edna?

D: Uh yah

R: Whad she do, die?

D: Mm:hm,

Terasaki, 1976, in Levinson 1983:356

Any conversation may run into difficulties and conversational analysts use the term 'repair' to describe efforts made by speakers to iron out any problems. Repairs are either self-initiated (preferred option) or other-

initiated (dispreferred option). Repairs often provide the analyst with useful data regarding what participants consider to be normal, smooth-running conversation. In the following example, the speaker clarifies the referent of the indefinite pronoun (*on*) by substituting the name (*Jacquotte*) of the individual referred to:

mais *on* me dit fais... *Jacquotte* me dit...

Thus the identification of repair strategies may be of importance in the analysis of pronominal use.

(11) Ethnography of speaking

Gumperz (1982:155) defines the aim of the ethnography of speaking as being 'to show how social norms affect the use and distribution of communicative resources'. Indeed, it is an area which has brought new insights into the teaching and learning of languages in recent decades. Starting from the premise that no-one speaks the same way all of the time and that different groups, or speech communities, may speak differently one from the other, analysts use naturally-occurring data to investigate differing rules of appropriateness (15). Much of the main theoretical work carried out within this framework has been by Dell Hymes (1972, 1974 a & b) (16) who has provided a taxonomy of terms to discuss and investigate

the rules of speaking. He refers to the 'speech situation' as the general context in which the use of language takes place such as 'ceremonies, fights, hunts, meals, love-making and the like' (Hymes, 1974a) and uses 'speech events' to refer to the actual language activity involved such as giving a speech, chairing a debate, etc. For Hymes a 'speech act' is the minimum component of the above, a component which native speakers have no difficulty in identifying as such, e.g. apologies, reminders, etc.

Hymes goes on to provide a detailed description of the different variables of the context in which these speech events take place which may need to be taken into account at the time of analysis. Amongst other factors, he stresses the importance of studying the participants, their relationship and their interactive goals, what varieties of language and registers are being used and what are the norms of interaction and interpretation in their given speech community. While not all of the components he outlines are relevant all of the time, they provide not only a useful framework for investigating the sociolinguistic component of communicative competence (17) but also a timely corrective regarding the potential validity of research results. For research on a given corpus can only be representative of the particular features of context which are the focus of study. For

example, the findings of an investigation of conflict (speech event) in court (a speech situation involving its own norms of interaction and interpretation) may be very different from those of conflict in urban teenage (participants) subculture (with its own norms of interaction and interpretation). A contextual description of the data used in this study will be found in Chapter Three.

O-pragmatic arguments will be of particular importance when describing the data investigated in this study in terms of participants, speech situation, event and acts (see Chapter 3). The interpretation of personal reference in many cases depends on the intersubjective assumptions outlined above. Indeed, as was suggested, it is often only when miscommunication is recognised by participants that it is possible to gain some insight into these very assumptions. Conversational analysts have also shown how the management of conversation itself can give rise to threats to the face of the participants and therefore their approach should throw some light on how participants present themselves in naturally-occurring spoken discourse.

1.4 Universality versus culture-specificity and second language learning

In 1.2.3 it was noted that Brown and Levinson argue strongly in favour of the universality of speech act strategies and give evidence for this in three unrelated languages. However, while they point to the universality of social pressures (in the form of face wants) as a functional pressure on language, their theory also provides for observable differences of ethos between cultures. In brief, they suggest that it is the social relationships in a given society (as assessed by D and P which in turn determine Wx) which account for these noticeable differences in communication strategies.

In the light of this, does the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in politeness strategies in a second language present any problems to the language learner other than the need to become acquainted with the social attitudes of the cultures in question? Fraser (1978) believes it does not and, on the basis of a comparative study of request strategies across 14 languages, has argued that they are largely similar. He cites in particular an indirect request strategy which questions the hearer's ability to carry out the desired request:

Podría Vd. Pouvez-vous Could you

However, Schmidt and Richards (1979), when relating speech act theory to second language learning, take issue with this view. stating that "there is sufficient evidence to argue (...) that speech act strategies will be found to be universal only if they are expressed in extremely general terms". While, for example, the politeness strategy of hedging one's opinions may be universal, the linguistic means to carry this out may vary extensively. For example, while English may use tagging (isn't it, don't you) as a hedging device, no such syntactical structure exists in Hebrew (Blum-Kulka (1982)). Conversely, there is a standard Hebrew device for making indirect requests by questioning whether the act may be performed some time in the future:

Ulay telex lison

(Perhaps you'll go to bed)

(1982:34)

While this device is available to speakers of English, it is not a commonly used structure.

Furthermore, the example cited by Fraser, 'Can you hand me that book?' has also been cited by Searle (1975), who points out that, whereas the modal verb 'can' functions as a conventionalised request form in English, it can only be translated literally into certain other languages (e.g. Japanese) as a query about the hearer's ability to perform the task. Wierzbicka (1985) takes issue with assumptions

that every language has recourse to the same strategies and accuses speech act studies of ethnocentrism and gives the Polish example where a Polish host is addressing a guest, Vanessa Smith:

Mrs Vanessa! Please! Sit! Sit!

However, if an invitation to sit down is classified within this culture as a non-threatening act, then there is no motivation for a speaker to depart from Gricean maximal efficiency. Here, a foreign learner of Polish needs to draw on sociocultural knowledge specific to Polish to use and interpret such an invitation.

156

Schmidt and Richards (1980¹) conclude that 'even if speech act strategies are to a certain extent universal (...) learners of new languages still need to learn several important things'. These, in addition to an acquaintance with the social attitudes of the culture in question, include 'the particular conventionalised forms in the new language, particular applications of general principles which vary systematically among cultures and groups and to a certain extent among individuals '. Indeed, Edmondson et al. (1984²) have shown that learners tend to mark politeness functions in pragmatically inadequate ways. They are unable to match the weightiness of an FTA and the communicative resource used to deal with it and they tend

to adopt what they term 'the principle of minimum communicative requirement' i.e. they realize the propositional content of the speech act but frequently do not mark their speech acts for the relational and expressive functions (18).

Given that systems of personal pronominal reference are non-isomorphic, it follows that learners of a foreign language also need to know how to use and interpret personal reference in the foreign language. To take one example from French, the pronoun *on* cannot be semantically mapped on to its nearest English equivalent 'one' (one prominent value of *on* being that of 'we'). However, Gougenheim (see Mülhäusler and Harré (1990), Chapter 6), in his description of the research behind '*Le français fondamental*', an inventory of the most commonly used words in the French language which was to provide the basis for a 'threshold level' elementary French course, points out that *on* was the twelfth most frequent lexical item attested in the corpus of naturally-occurring language. Furthermore, Söll (1979), in her transcription of a corpus of data of conversations with nine-year-old French children, observed that there were no cases of the first person plural pronoun *nous* in the unstressed subject position, this slot having being occupied by *on*. If it were simply the case that *on* had substituted *nous*, then this issue would not be of interest from the point of view

of politeness strategies. However, it will be argued in this study that *on*, like other pronouns, fills a gap in French which is specific to that language alone and provides a resource for politeness strategies which can only be understood within the terms of that language.

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter we have reviewed a number of approaches to the fundamental question of discovering how language is used by speakers and hearers for communication. We looked at ways in which the language system interacts with context to produce meaning through reference, deixis, presupposition and inference. We looked at behavioural and social motivations for language use, where it is assumed that language is essentially a cooperative activity but where the interests of clarity can be overridden by those of creating or maintaining social relationships. Finally, we looked at how participants, within a given context, use language to manage the social activity of talk itself. We argued that while it may be true that all these approaches deal in language universals, each language has its own particular means of realizing them. While we shall use a mixed approach in this study, combining elements from these different strands in our investigation of how pronominal reference functions in our data, we shall

particularly examine what insights Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory can shed on this area.

Chapter 1 Notes

1. This definition of pragmatics corresponds more closely to the Continental. See Levinson (1983:5) and Fasold (1990:119).
2. For a comprehensive account of Speech Act Theory see Levinson 1983, Chapter 5.
3. Austin's felicity conditions were the conditions that a performative must meet if it is to be successful. Fasold (1990:149) summarizes them as follows:
 - A.1 There has to be such a speech act recognized by the society.
 - A.2 It has to be performed by the right person under the right circumstances.
 - B.1 It has to be performed correctly.
 - B.2 It has to be performed completely.
 - Γ.1 The person or persons involved in performing the speech act have to have the thoughts and feelings connected with that speech act, if any.
 - Γ.2 The person or persons have to conduct themselves subsequently as if they had the right thoughts and feelings.
4. Searle (1969) refined Austin's felicity conditions further, classifying them into four main types; conditions on propositional content, preparatory preconditions, conditions on sincerity and the essential condition and giving specific conditions for individual speech acts such as advising, warning, etc.
5. See Fasold 1990, Chapter 1 for an overview of research on address forms.
6. See Levinson 1983, Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of Gricean theory. The rationalist argument on which this theory (and others based upon it e.g. Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987) is predicated has met with a certain amount of criticism. For example, Taylor and Cameron (1987:85) take issue with Grice's view that the CP is not an arbitrary convention or a conditioned habit but rather is a rational principle. We feel that while the issue of making explicit the ideological basis on which theories are based is an important one, this objection does not detract from the potential validity of the theory as such.
7. Sperber and Wilson (1986) have also proposed a major refinement to Gricean theory but move in a very different direction, reducing Gricean maxims to one overarching maxim of relevance. They say (1986:vii) "To communicate is to claim an individual's attention; hence to communicate is to imply that the information communicated is relevant" and argue that the maxim of relevance is enough on its own to account for utterance interpretation. Within their theory, which is based exclusively on confected data, politeness is not seen as a functional pressure on language use. Their concern is less with the establishment and maintenance of relationships than

with the conveyance of information and as such, is not relevant to the purposes of this study.

8. The six maxims of the PP are:

Maxim of Tact (in directives and commissives)

- i) Minimize cost to *other*
- ii) Maximize benefit to *other*

Maxim of Generosity (in directives and commissives)

- i) Minimize benefit to *self*
- ii) Maximise cost to *self*

Maxim of Approbation (in expressives and assertives)

- i) Minimize dispraise of *other*
- ii) Maximize praise of *other*

Maxim of Modesty (in expressives and assertives)

- i) Minimize praise of *self*
- ii) Maximize dispraise of *self*

Maxim of Agreement (in assertives)

- i) Minimize disagreement between *self* and *other*
- ii) Maximise agreement between *self* and *other*

Maxim of Sympathy (in assertives)

- i) Minimize antipathy between *self* and *other*
- ii) Maximize sympathy between *self* and *other*

in Jucker (1986:65)

9. These terms were introduced into linguistics by Roger Brown. See also Brown and Ford, 1961. Hudson (1980:122) finds the term power self-explanatory and defines solidarity as concerning "the social distance between people - how much experience they have shared, how many social characteristics they share (religion, sex, age, country of origin, race, occupation, interests, etc.), how far they are prepared to share intimacies and other factors."
10. Brown and Levinson and Levinson use a mixture of naturally occurring, elicited and intuitive data. In their introduction to the 1987 edition they state that these should have been more clearly distinguished and admit to problems with this approach.
11. Brown and Levinson (1987:145) define a hedge as 'a particle, word or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is *partial*, or true only in certain respects, or that it is *more* true and complete than perhaps might be expected.
12. Kasper (1990:196) distinguishes between strategic politeness and 'politeness as social indexing'. The choice of the T/V pronoun belongs to this latter category.
13. The ethnomethodological approach grew out of work done in sociology by Harold Garfinkel. For a fuller account of this approach see Levinson Chapter 6 and for an account of its application see Atkinson and Drew (1979).

14. For a discussion of the 'formalism vs functionalism' debate in CA, see Taylor, T & D. Cameron 1987: 113-117.
15. For an overview of this area see Saville-Troike (1982), *The Ethnography of Communication*.
16. For a summary of Hymes' work and a view on its relevance to language teaching see Wolfson 1989:5-9, and Wolfson 1983.
17. See Canale's (1983) definition of 'communicative competence'.
18. It could be argued that the concerns of applied linguistics are diametrically opposed to those of the conversational analysis. Conversational analysts seek to describe and uncover the motivations behind certain linguistic choices while applied linguists are bound, by the nature of the profession, to prescribe guidelines for language use. Indeed, one of the major areas of development in applied linguistic research has been aimed at producing rules for use (how language is used) as well as usage (the lexico-grammatical system) (see Widdowson, 1978, 1979). Such attempts are nonetheless predicated on descriptions and cross-cultural comparisons (see, for example, Blum-Kulka 1982) of the languages in question.

CHAPTER TWO A MODEL FOR THE ANALYSIS OF PRONOMINAL USAGE

2.0 Introduction

In the review of the literature on the analysis of personal pronominal usage below, a principal concern will be to define the terms to be used subsequently in the analysis of the data (Chapters 4-6). While Chapter One discussed methodologies designed to illuminate instances of language use (1), this chapter will focus on the description of the linguistic resources available for personal reference in both French and Spanish and on questions pertaining to the composition and usage of these systems.

Accounts of pronominal reference in traditional grammars usually contain a table illustrating the pronoun system, for example:

Forms of the pronoun as subject (2)

Person	Singular		Plural	
	Unstressed	Stressed	Unstressed	Stressed
1st	<i>je</i>	<i>moi</i>	<i>nous</i>	<i>nous</i>
2nd	<i>tu</i>	<i>toi</i>	<i>vous</i>	<i>vous</i>
3rd	<i>il, elle</i>	<i>lui, elle</i>	<i>ils, elles</i>	<i>eux, elles</i>

Judge and Healey (1983:55)

and are accompanied by a commentary on the potential

for use for each pronoun which has the clear aim of showing a series of fixed and accessible senses (3) for each pronoun. Thus a given pronoun, if it can be used in a variety of different ways, will have a separate description of each usage. For example:

1.5.4 The case of 'on'

1.5.4.1. The indefinite 'on'

(i) On may refer to people unknown, e.g. on dit que.... In this case it is grammatically singular but semantically plural.

(ii) On may refer to a specific person whose identity is unknown to the speaker, e.g. on m'a volé mon portefeuille.

(Judge & Healey 1983:70)

Spanish grammars are similarly ordered:

Nominative	Accusative	Dative	Prepositional Form
yo, I	me	me	mí
tú, thou	te	te	tí
él, he (it)	lo (things)	le	él
	le (persons)		
ella she (it)	la	le (la)	ella
ello, it	lo	-	ello
nosotros (f, nosotras), we	nos	nos	nosotros (f, nosotras)
vosotros (f, vosotras), you	os	os	vosotros (f, vosotras)
ellos, they (m)	los (les)	les	ellos
ellas, they (f)	las	les (las)	ellas
Reflexive form, third person only:			
-	se	se	sí

(Harmer & Norton, 1957:88)

However, these and similar accounts are largely unsatisfactory for the purposes of a study such as this, the primary aim of which is to investigate how speakers select from within a closed set of personal pronouns to refer to themselves and others within a speech situation: such reference is essentially deictic. The grammars above are primarily concerned with rules governing the written language and give very little guidance regarding which pronouns are used for deictic rather than anaphoric reference nor to the choices available to speakers and hearers within a given system. Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) argue in the introduction to their study of the social use of pronouns, that most linguists concentrate on the anaphoric and syntagmatic (4) functions of pronouns rather than those which are deictic and paradigmatic. It is the aim of this study to concentrate on the latter functions.

Secondly, if considerations of politeness do exercise a functional pressure on the selection and interpretation of pronouns for personal reference, it is expected that they will influence speakers and hearers to depart from Gricean maximal efficiency in the direction of redressing potential threat to face through increased indirectness or directness. It therefore becomes essential to investigate the degree of indeterminacy afforded by each of the forms available within each of the two systems under investigation. In other words, to what extent do the sense

and the usage of a given pronoun restrict its potential range of referents even before pragmatic considerations are brought to bear?

Implicit in this notion of indeterminacy is the range of usage available for each personal pronoun. While traditional grammars provide paradigms of usage for each pronoun, indicating that, for example, in French, the pronouns *on*, *tu* and *vous* may all be used for generic reference, in the analysis of use, it may not be possible to assign categorically an individual occurrence of one of these pronouns exclusively, say, to generic usage. Therefore, it becomes essential to investigate the other paradigms applicable to this pronoun (for example, speaker/hearer, singular/plural, etc.). Boutet (1986:29), in her study of the French pronoun *on*, concurs with Deshaies (1985) when she states that:

...les morphèmes sont liés dans la langue à d'autres morphèmes absents de la chaîne parlée

morphemes are bound, within the language system, to other morphemes which are not present in the utterance itself

Deshaies suggests that these alternative values remain attached to the use of the pronoun even when they are not intended by the speaker or perceived by the listener. He further suggests that the greater the ambiguity perceived by the listener the more present these alternative values

will appear to be. He illustrates this view when he talks about the language situation in Quebec where the pronouns *tu/vous* are firmly established as generic pronouns and yet where:

il continue d'exister des situations d'interlocution où un "tu" ou un "vous" indéfini peuvent choquer ou surprendre le locuteur: preuve de la permanence de la valeur personnelle d'un "vous" ou de la valeur de tutoiement d'un "tu" qui viennent nécessairement s'associer à la valeur d'indéfini (Boutet, 1986:30)

there are still speech situations where a generic "tu" or "vous" can disconcert or surprise the hearer: this is proof of the presence of the personal value of a "vous" or the T value of a "tu" which inevitably accompanies the generic value

For, in French, if a speaker wishes to make a generic point and chooses not to use *on*, a choice must be made between *tu* and *vous*, a choice which generally, but not always (5) reflects the relationship between the speakers. *on* and *tu/vous* may function as equivalents, therefore, in terms of genericity; however, the choice of one rather than the other leads inevitably to the encoding of other information in addition to that of genericity.

It is on account of these reasons that, in the model developed below, there are three main aims:

(i) to show the range of choices provided for deictic reference by the pronominal systems of French and Spanish.

(ii) to show the paradigmatic values which accompany the use of a given pronoun.

(iii) to show the margins for indeterminacy and thus for potential ambiguity of each pronoun within its system.

The model thus evolved will then serve as a basis for an analysis of extended samples of language use.

2.1 The pronominal system

The pronouns which will be of concern in this study are those which can be used deictically for speaker and hearer reference in interaction. These are generally, but not exclusively, described in traditional grammars as first and second person pronouns. Enriquez (1984:29) (6) points out that, while grammarians generally agree on what constitutes a pronoun, there are differing views regarding the nature of the category of person. The main distinction to be made is between person as a semantic and as a grammatical category.

Semantically, 'person' corresponds to participant role in a speech situation with 'first' person referring to the speaker, 'second' person to the hearer with 'third' person 'not correlat(ing) with any positive participant role' (Lyons, 1977b). However, the grammatical categories, with

the exception of the first and second person singular pronouns, do not map onto their semantic counterparts. For example, the first person plural pronoun 'does not normally stand in the same relationship to *I* (the 'first person singular') as *boys, cows, etc.* do to *boy, cow, etc.*' (Lyons: 1968:277). Indeed, the first person plural pronoun is used to refer to the speaker in addition to one or more other persons and these persons may or may not include the hearer. Thus the grammatical category of first person reference may include, on a semantic level, reference to either or both the second and third persons. In some languages the distinction between the inclusion and exclusion of the hearer is systemically encoded; this is not the case for English, French and Spanish.

Conversely, there are a number of pronouns which, while being used semantically in interaction for first and second person reference, derive grammatically from third person reference. Such is the case of *usted* and *ustedes* in Spanish which are derived respectively from *vuestra merced* (your mercy) and *vuestras mercedes* (your mercies) (often further contracted in written Spanish to *Vd.* and *Vds.*), the pronouns *on* in French and *uno/a* in Spanish, derived respectively from the Latin nouns *homo* and *unus*, and the Spanish clitic *se*. It becomes clear, therefore, that it is necessary to follow other researchers in the area of pronominal reference (Enríquez, 1984, Laberge, 1977) and

to attempt a semantic classification of those pronouns used for speaker and hearer reference (7).

Laberge (1977) identifies the following factors as being essential to a componential (8) analysis of personal pronouns:

[+-system] Whether the pronoun is included in the pronominal system. In French, for example, the pronoun *on* would not be classified as part of the system given its derivation from the noun *homo*. (9)

[+- specific] Whether the referent of the pronoun can or cannot be identified within the context of utterance.

[± speaker] whether the referent includes or excludes the speaker.

[± hearer] whether the referent includes or excludes the speaker

[± minimal group] Whether the referent consists of at least two persons or consists of one person.

[± masculine] Whether the referent is semantically or morphologically masculine or feminine.

This enables Laberge to produce a componential analysis of each personal pronoun, for example, the pronoun *je* is analysed as being:

[+ system]

[+ specific]

[+ speaker]

[- minimal group]

This approach allows her to provide eight different analyses of the pronoun *on*. However, such an approach assumes that the particular usage intended by a speaker for a given pronoun can be identified in a given linguistic context. In the preceding chapter, it was argued that this was not possible. The problem with such classifications for studies of pronominal use is that we cannot assume, unlike Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990:35), 'that pronouns are tidily indexical of speakers' and that 'once the context is known, the pronoun-to-person relation should be simple and unproblematic'.

The focus of this study is to investigate the potential for multiple interpretations of the use of a given pronoun and therefore, while the factors that Laberge has identified above may be of use in arriving at a semantic model for pronominal reference, they will need to be treated from a different perspective.

Enríquez bases her model on work by Benveniste (1975, 1979, etc.) and Schmidely (1979) and identifies three main semantic components of pronominal reference, P1 (speaker), P2 (hearer) and \bar{P} (non-participant). The non-participant category is divided into two subgroups, P3 which includes reference by a personal pronoun (or equivalent) to a person or persons other than the speaker and hearer, and P0 which includes reference by, for example, use of impersonal reference to the same category. The category P3 is further subdivided into H3 where the reference is to human beings and H where it is not. This system of analysis, in the case of Spanish, is unproblematic when applied to the first and second person singular pronouns. However, in the case of the third person and the so-called plural pronouns (which are derived from a combination of the elements above), the model also assumes access to the intended usage.

The approach adopted below is based on the two systems above. The crucial difference is that instead of providing a componential analysis for a given pronoun usage, it takes the pronoun as the point of departure and seeks initially to describe its place within the pronominal system. Subsequent to this an attempt will be made to provide a model which captures the principal features of usage. The categories to be applied in this analysis of

the pronominal system, and which correspond to the grammatical categories of person, number and gender, are:

	[± speaker]	
(i)	[± hearer]	person
	[± third person]	
(ii)	[± minimal group]	number
(iii)	[± masculine]	gender

These will be defined below.

2.1.1 Person [± speaker] [± hearer] [± third person]

Those pronouns used to refer to the first person (*je* and *nous* in French and *yo* and *nosotros/as* in Spanish) all encode reference to the speaker. *Je* and *yo* both exclude reference to the hearer and *nous* and *nosotros/as* may or may not include reference to the hearer and/or to the third person. The second person pronouns (*tú*, *Vd.*, *vosotros/as* and *Vds.* in Spanish, *tu*, *vous* in French) all exclude reference to the speaker and include reference to the hearer. However, there is a major difference between the forms which are grammatically singular and those which are plural insofar as the plural forms may encode an element of third person reference. For example, the first person plural forms *nosotros/as*, *nous* can be used to refer to the speaker and the hearer(s) [+ speaker] + [+ hearer

(s)] + [- third person], the speaker and the hearer(s) and another or others [+ speaker] + [+ hearer (s)] + [+third person(s)] or the speaker and another or others [+speaker] + [-hearer] + [+ third person(s)]. The second person plural forms *vous*, *Vds.*, *vosotros/as* can be used to refer to [- speaker] + [+ hearer(s)] + [- third person] and to [- speaker] + [+ hearer(s)] + [+ third person (s)]. While in use the French pronoun *on* and the Spanish clitic *se* may or may not include reference to speaker, hearer(s) or third person(s), grammatically they are third person only [+ third person].

2.1.2 Number [+/- minimal group]

We shall retain Laberge's definition of a minimal group being composed of two or more individuals. The first and second person singular forms *yo*, *tú*, *Vd.*, *je*, *tu* all refer to one individual [- minimal group]. The plural forms *vous*, *nous*, *Vds.*, *vosotros/as*, *nosotros/as*, all refer to more than one person [+ minimal group]. The forms *on* and *se*, being morphologically singular are classed as [- minimal group]. *On* may be accompanied by inflection for number within the utterance, which in the case of French is generally phonologically indistinguishable from the unmarked form (e.g. *on est arrivé*, *on est arrivés*). However, while such marking may help a hearer to identify a referent, the identification is achieved through

presupposition rather than through any additional information encoded within the pronoun or verbal form itself.

2.1.3 Gender [\pm masculine]

The category of gender in French and Spanish is grammatical rather than semantic in nature and while in the case of animate beings gender generally corresponds to the sex of the beings, this is not necessarily so. Gender is relevant insofar as, in some instances, the marking of an utterance for gender through an inflected form of the pronoun, can restrict the range of possible referents. For example, in Spanish, the pronoun *uno/a*, the first person plural *nosotros/as* and the familiar second person plural *vosotros/as* are inflected for gender while in French there is no such inflection of personal pronouns. In both French and Spanish, there may also be inflection for gender of adjectives, e.g. (10):

- (a) Vous êtes satisfaites?
- (b) ¿Están (ustedes) satisfechas?

Such inflection may serve as a disambiguating device in a limited number of cases. In the two languages studied, the feminine form is only used when the referent is entirely

feminine in gender. If the referent consists, for example, of a group of a thousand women and one man, the correct way of referring to this group is by using the masculine form. As such the masculine is the unmarked form. However, in many cases in French, the feminine form (like the plural in the case of *vous*), while being distinct in the written language, is not so in the spoken language. For example, if one reads, say in a novel:

Vous êtes arrivées avant sept heures?

the referent is known to consist of, and only of, more than one female. If this sentence is heard as an utterance it is phonologically indistinguishable from the following forms,

- (a) *Vous êtes arrivé*
- (b) *Vous êtes arrivée*
- (c) *Vous êtes arrivés*

(where, in written form, (a) is not inflected for number or for gender, (b) is uninflected for number but inflected for gender and (c) is inflected for number but uninflected for gender).

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that in such cases, as in the case of number, disambiguation is

achieved through the mechanism of presupposition.

Therefore inflection for gender and number of the type described above will not figure within this model.

A combination of the factors described above should enable us to see, in diagrammatic form, the position of each pronoun within its system. Diagrams 1 and 2 below illustrate the personal pronominal systems in French and Spanish (11):

Diagram 1 The French personal pronominal system

Pronoun	± speaker	± hearer	± 3rd person	± min. group	± masculine
je	+	-	-	-	+
tu	-	+	-	-	+
nous	+	±	±	+	+
vous	-	+	±	+	+
on	-	-	+	-	+

Diagram 2 The Spanish personal pronominal system.

Pronoun	± speaker	± hearer	± 3rd person	± min. group	± masculine
yo	+	-	-	-	+
tú	-	+	-	-	+
Vd,	-	+	-	-	+
nosotros	+	±	±	+	+
nosotras	+	±	±	+	-
Vds,	-	+	±	+	+
vosotros	-	+	±	+	+
vosotras	-	+	±	+	-
uno	-	-	+	-	+
una	-	-	+	-	-
se	-	-	+	-	+

2.2. Usage

The diagrams above illustrate the range of pronominal resources available in each of the systems studied and their relationship with each other within the system in terms of person, number and gender. However, they tell us little about the usage of the pronouns. In order to examine the functions available within the system, it is necessary to add one further category, that of ± generic].

2.2.1 Generic and specific usage [± generic]

Pronouns can be used *generically* or *specifically*. A generic proposition, according to Lyons (1977:194) is a proposition which says something not about a particular group or a particular individual but about a whole class and he illustrates this with the example:

The lion is a friendly beast

where 'the lion' refers to the whole class of lions. Generic propositions, he argues, are not only tenseless but aspectless and therefore can be identified as such in part by syntactic markers such as, in example 1 above, the use of a present tense construction. This is the approach which has been adopted by Laberge and Sankoff (1980) when they try to isolate what they call '*on indéfini*' (indefinite *on*), for example:

A part ça, à travailler puis à lire *on* s'améliore *toujours* un petit peu

Here the adverb *toujours* is argued to contribute to the creation of a context of generalisation and therefore to the interpretation of the use of *on* in this instance as being 'indefinite' or generic.

Huddleston (1984:288), when talking about pronominal reference, prefers to use the term 'generic' to refer to the following use of *you* in English:

You need extraordinarily high qualifications to get into Dunbar College

He states that 'you here is a stylistically less formal variant of non-deictic *one*' (1984:288). He later points out that in some varieties of English *one* can be used both deictically and non-deictically while in other varieties it can only be used non-deictically (generically). In the literature, nonetheless, both terms 'generic' and 'indefinite' appear to have broadly equal currency.

For the purposes of this study, we shall use the term 'generic' to refer to what Judge and Healey (1983:70) are describing in subsection (iv) when they use the category of '*indefinite on*'. They say:

on may refer to everybody in general, e.g. *on ne porte plus de faux-col aujourd'hui*

Equally, the term generic will be used to refer to the category isolated by Halliday and Hasan (1976:44) as 'generalized human', by Laberge and Sankoff (1979) as 'indefinite' reference and by Boutet (1986) as '*parcours*' (by which she means '*une interprétation en terme de parcours sur la classe des êtres humains*' i.e. that the speaker is included like any individual in the internal composition of the given pronoun).

The term specific reference will be used to refer to the potential of a pronoun to refer to an individual or a group of individuals (as opposed to a class of individuals), *whether these individuals have been identified specifically or not*. This definition therefore covers what Laberge identifies as both [+ specific] and [- specific]. Thus, in the examples below,

a) We women say no

b) We didn't know what to do

'we' is used to refer specifically to a group of individuals. In example a), 'we' may appear linguistically to have a more precise referential meaning ('we' = (a particular set of) women) (12) than in example 5 (we = speaker (+ other(s))). However, the term 'specific reference' is not concerned with the degree of identifiability of the referent as this falls within the realm of use but rather with usage i.e. the potential for use of a given pronoun. Specific reference is used therefore to mean potentially identifiable personal reference in opposition to generic reference which has the sense of 'people in general'. Judge and Healey (1985:70) use the term 'indefinite' when speaking of the use of *on* to refer to a specific person or persons whose identity is unknown to the speaker or known but felt to be irrelevant.

We shall include this element of their 'indefinite' category under specific reference. Thus, in French and Spanish all the pronouns included for study can be used for specific reference; only *tu*, *vous* and *on* in French and *tú*, *Vd.*, *se* and *uno* in Spanish can be used for generic reference.

2.2.2 Other aspects of usage

Other aspects of usage which need to be captured in a model of pronominal usage, are:

- the usage of *vous* as a polite singular as well as a plural second person pronoun
- the usage of the first person plural pronoun to refer to the speaker alone as in the authorial or royal 'we'
- the usage of the third person pronouns *on* and *se* to refer to the first, second and third persons

This gives us the following model of pronominal usage:

Diagram 3 Usage of the French pronominal system

Pronoun	± generic	± speaker	± hearer	± 3rd person	± min, group	±
masculine						
je	-	+	-	-	-	+
tu	±	±	+	±	±	+
nous	-	+	±	±	±	+
vous	±	±	+	±	±	+
on	±	±	±	±	±	±

Diagram 4 Usage of the Spanish pronominal system

yo	-	+	-	-	-	±
tú	±	±	+	±	±	±
Vd,	±	±	+	±	±	±
nosotros	-	+	±	±	±	+
nosotras	-	+	±	±	±	-
Vds,	-	-	+	±	+	+
vosotros	-	-	+	±	+	+
vosotras	-	-	+	±	+	-
uno	±	±	±	±	±	+
una	±	+	±	±	±	-
se	±	±	±	±	±	+

These diagrams illustrate the number of different functions which can be fulfilled by one token. For

example, *vous* can be used both generically and specifically; when it is used generically it covaries with *tu* and *on*. It excludes the speaker and includes the addressee and when it is used to refer to one addressee it is the 'polite' form and covaries with *tu*. However, it may also be used to refer, in addition, to other addressees and also to third persons not participating in the speech situation.

So far this chapter has examined the pronouns available for speaker/hearer reference in French and Spanish and has examined the potential of each in terms of usage. The section which follows will look at the issue of determinacy of reference to investigate to what extent some pronouns are, in themselves, more determinate than others.

2.3 Indeterminacy

It has already been established that all of the pronouns selected for analysis can be used for speaker/hearer reference. Diagrams 1 and 2 illustrated the position each pronoun within its grammatical system and Diagrams 3 and 4 illustrated the standard ranges of usage for each pronoun. This information should provide a basis for the classification of each pronominal system along a cline of determinacy/indeterminacy. The term 'determinacy' will be

used to refer to the precision with which the choice of a given pronoun makes it possible to restrict the range of potential referents. We are not concerned here with the speaker's intention or the hearer's interpretation. For contextual features may serve to disambiguate the use of the most indeterminate pronouns, e.g.

on a dit qu'il fallait prévoir à l'avance...

While *on* is both grammatically and semantically indeterminate (it can cover all the referential ground covered by all the other pronouns), it may be used by a speaker to identify a particular group/individual to a hearer in which case the speaker will have achieved what Lyons (1977b) calls 'successful reference'. The hearer, however, successfully recovers the reference on the basis of pragmatic rather than linguistic information.

We shall use 'personal cline' to refer to the continuum of personal reference going from the self to that which is furthest from the self. Most of the literature on this area of deixis places speaker reference at the head of this cline. Haverkate (1984:4), in developing a model of speaker/hearer reference to replace a previously hearer-oriented one (13), cites Dixon (1979:85)

Most discourse in any language, is oriented to the people involved in the speech act, and pre-eminently to the speaker...

In the speaker's view of the world, as it impinges on him and he describes it in his language, he will be the quintessential agent. Radiating out from this egocentric focus, the next most likely agent will surely be the addressee.

Wilson (1990:58) also views the 'I' form as the deictic centre of what he calls a 'distancing scale' or 'pronominal scale' for pronouns (see also Rees 1983, Maitland and Wilson 1987 and Maitland 1988). The starting point for the work of Wilson and Maitland is the scale developed by Rees (1983). This was seen as a generic scale for all speakers of English showing the position of each pronoun in relation to the speaker in terms of distance.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
I	ME	YOU	ONE	YOU	IT	SHE	HE	THEY
		direct		indefinite				
		address						

(Rees, 1983:16 in Wilson 1990:58)

Maitland argues that the relative distribution of these pronouns can vary according to the idiolect of each speaker and has produced a individual pronominal scale for the three British politicians Margaret Thatcher, Neil Kinnock and Michael Foot. This scaling is produced after close analysis of naturally-occurring speech from the three politicians. Nonetheless, these pronominal scales, like that of Rees, focus on language use and assume accessibility to speaker intention insofar as the analyst allocates each

occurrence of a pronoun to one particular usage category.

For example, in the following extract from a speech by Thatcher:

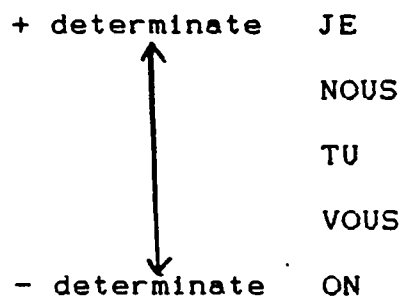
But isn't it amazing how when you bring down inflation to a level far below what they said was possible they take it for granted that anyone could have done it

they classify Thatcher's use of *you* in Laberge and Sankoff's category of 'situational insertion' (see 4.3.2) and argue that the pronoun is used to refer to Thatcher herself and is therefore equivalent to 'I'. While providing an insightful interpretative analysis of the use of pronouns, a detailed knowledge of usage is assumed by the authors. It is our contention that it is the mismatch here between usage (i.e. that '*you*' is not primarily used grammatically or semantically for self-referencing but rather for hearer and generic reference) and use (the authors argue convincingly that '*you*' is, in this context, a synonym for 'I') that calls for interpretation and explanation. In this case a supplementary explanation to that given by the authors might be, in terms of Brown and Levinson's interactional theory, that the use of 'I' might pose a threat to the face of the speaker as it is in conventional terms too immodest (as well as possibly being economical with the truth), the use of '*we*' might carry the implicature that her audience (the central council of the Conservative party) had shared the responsibility thus

diminishing her own significance or might be seen as a possible use of the 'royal we', 'one' as being too socially marked, etc. Thus we need to be able to explore the margins for indeterminacy (as well as the paradigmatic values) of each term if we are to account for preferences in choosing one functionally equivalent term over another.

2.3.1 Indeterminacy in French

The most appropriate personal cline of determinacy of the French pronominal system for this study is as follows:



Assuming the egocentric focus referred to above, the participant role of speaker or first person will be the most determinate (in terms of the context of utterance) followed by that of the hearer or second person, with that of the non-participant or third person as being least determinate. Within these terms of reference, *je* will provide a deictic centre to this personal cline being the most determinate pronoun insofar as it is used deictically

to refer to, and only to, the speaker of the utterance (14).

Benveniste highlights the fuzzy nature of *nous* when he says that '*... "nous" n'est pas un "je" quantifié ou multiplié, c'est un "je" dilaté au-delà de la personne stricte, à la fois accru et de contours vagues*' (1966:235) ("*nous*" is not a multiplication of "*je*", it is rather a "*je*" which has dilated beyond the bounds of the person, both expanded and with fuzzy edges). Thus *nous*, in use, can have a value as referentially precise as

Marie et moi, nous allons à la piscine

where the reference is presupposed to be to the speaker plus one other named individual and,

A l'époque actuelle, nous avons une technologie tellement avancée que...

where the reference could be argued to include everyone alive on the planet Earth at the time of utterance. Urban (1986) portrays the range of reference of '*we*' in terms of a series of concentric circles with the '*we*' of the speaker and one other at the centre and the '*we*' of humanity on the outer rim. While a given use of a pronoun may be adjudged on contextual grounds to be more or less determinate, what is of interest here is its semantic determinacy: it is

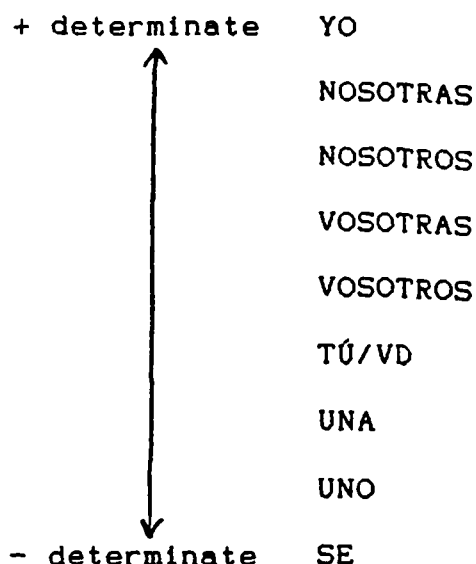
because *nous* categorically includes reference to the speaker that it possesses a stable semantic core, regardless of the extent of fuzziness of its outside edges.

The second person pronouns *tu* and *vous* stand in a similar relationship to each other, the semantic core of *tu* being found in its reference to at least one other person present at the situation of utterance. Like *nous* the boundaries of *tu* are fuzzy in that this pronoun can be used for generic reference; nonetheless, the addressee is categorically included in the notion of 'people in general'. *Vous* is grammatically plural and therefore conventionally implicates the presence of one or more other individuals in addition to the addressee. It can also, like *tu*, be used generically. The use of *vous* as a 'polite' pronoun to refer to a single addressee is what Brown and Levinson (1987:23) argue to be a 'frozen conversational implicature' which has become, over time, accepted usage.

On, which is grammatically a third person pronoun, is the least determinate pronoun in this system insofar as its referent can in no way be determined without reference to the situation of utterance.

2.3.2 Indeterminacy in Spanish

Let us now turn to the personal cline and indeterminacy in Peninsular Spanish personal reference. On the basis of the arguments used above, a pronominal cline for Spanish would be as follows:



The main differences between this cline and that for French are to be found in the inflection for gender of the pronouns *nosotros*, *vosotros* and *uno/a*. In the feminine form, the use of these pronouns restricts the possible referent to an individual woman or a group of women and as such increases the determinacy of the reference. Furthermore, *uno/a* insofar as they are used for generic reference, include both the speaker and the hearer in their internal composition, are more determinate than *se* which can be used to refer exclusively to non-participants in the conversation.

Given the larger set of personal pronouns available in Spanish for speaker/hearer reference (11 in Spanish against 5 for French), the system appears to provide less scope for indeterminacy. For example, Spanish provides two 'polite' second person pronouns, singular and plural where French provides only one, *vous*. It follows, therefore, that the singular 'polite' pronoun *Vd.* will be more determinate than its French counterpart.

However, indeterminacy appears to be built in elsewhere in the system. Spanish is unlike French where there is virtually automatic use of the personal pronoun even in cases of repetition (see Bally (1950) in Rosengren 1974). In Spanish, the use of the personal subject pronoun is not a syntactic requirement (given that in most cases Spanish grammaticalizes the category of person by inflecting the main verb) and its use, therefore, responds to a variety of other motivations. Barrenechea and Alonso (1973), in a study of peninsular and Latinamerican Spanish, suggest that the personal pronoun is only present in approximately 21% of possible contexts. Possible pragmatic motivations for the presence (rather than the absence) of these pronouns will be discussed in Chapter 6.

What is of concern to us here is the degree of indeterminacy afforded by verbal inflections in the absence of the pronoun. We shall refer to the absence of the

pronoun as zero-presence ([Ø]), i.e. that the pronoun is not present in a situation where its presence is made possible by the absence of a noun or noun phrase. For example:

[Ø] *Está controlado porque [Ø] nos pasan una crónica desde Madrid que [Ø] han estado allí en la... en la comparecencia de... de Ledesma en el congreso*

In the extract above there are three zero-presences, all of which grammatically are third person pronouns. The first slot could be filled by the pronouns *él, ello, Vd.*; context alone will suggest which is the most relevant value.

This can be compared with the following extract where a (cataphoric) referent (*los jueces* and *el presidente de la Diputación*) is supplied in each case:

lo que pueden decir los jueces o lo que dice el presidente de la Diputación sobre... sobre eso.

In order to refine the cline suggested above, these zero-presences must be taken into account insofar as the absence of a pronoun in some cases affords a greater degree of indeterminacy than its presence.

Let us take the example of the present tense of the verb *comer*, 'to eat' which is conjugated as follows:

como	I eat	comemos	we eat
comes	You (fam.) eat	comeis	you (fam. pl.) eat
come	you (pol), he,	comen	you (pol. sing.), they
	she, it eats		eat

In the case of the grammatically first and second person pronouns the presence of a pronoun merely replicates the information contained in the inflection. This is not the case for the third person. In the case of the personal pronouns *Vd.* and *Vds.*, the inflection of the verb is the same as for other third person reference (singular and plural) giving rise to much greater indeterminacy when the pronoun is omitted.

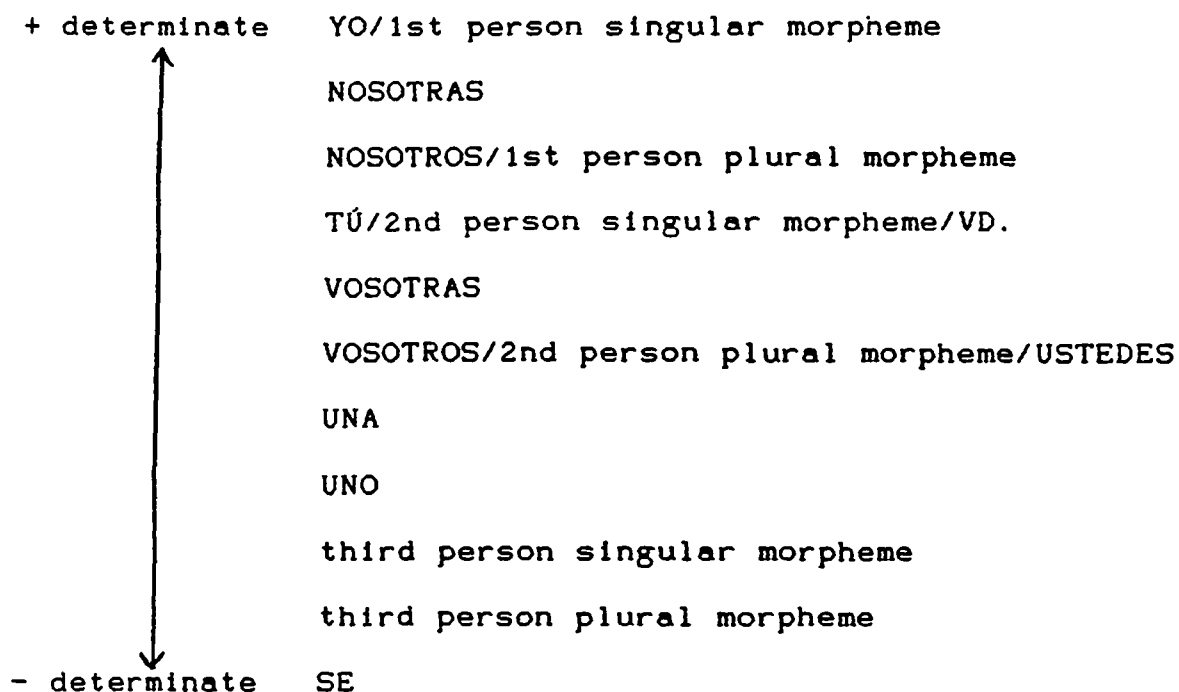
Verb endings in other tenses and in the subjunctive mood in Spanish may afford even greater degrees of indeterminacy as will become apparent from an examination of the verb endings in the Spanish verb conjugations (15).

For example, in the indicative mood, in the conditional and imperfect tenses and in the subjunctive mood in all tenses, the first person singular inflection is identical to that of the third person. Thus,

Comía mucho

could be used to refer to *yo, él, ella, ello, Vd.*

In the light of this, the previous cline of pronominal reference can be revised to include zero presence of the pronoun.



Within the categories pertaining to the third person morphemes there could be further subdivisions depending on the particular verb and verbal tense used.

2.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter, prior to an examination in Chapters 4-6 of the use of personal pronouns in naturally-occurring spoken French and Spanish, has been to define the terminology relevant to this area and to attempt to clarify a number of problems concerning pronoun systems and

pronominal usage. The neatness of the many tabulation systems provided by traditional grammars has tended to mask the fuzziness or indeterminacy inherent in such systems (quite apart from the problems related to deictic reference). This fuzziness may become apparent in use (say, when a hearer questions a speaker's use of a given pronoun, e.g. 'Who do you mean by 'we'?'). Yet many models devised to deal with pronominal use take as their starting point accessibility to the intentions of the speaker. While accepting that it is impossible to have full access to these intentions, it nonetheless should be possible, with a grasp of the possibilities offered by the system and a knowledge of the context of situation of utterance, to gain some insights into the pragmatics of pronominal use.

Chapter Two Notes

1. Widdowson (1978, 1979) distinguishes between usage which relates to the potential of a given language system to be used in a given way and use which relates to how actual speakers and writers use the language system in context.
2. The disjunctive or stressed pronoun is used in subject position, but normally only occurs in conjunction with the unstressed pronoun, for example '*Moi, je pense que...*'. See Grevisse, 1986:1011-1012.
3. Sense is used to mean the place of a given word, in this case a pronoun, within a system of relationships: in this case a speaker/hearer pronominal system, within a given language. See Lyons, 1968:427-428 and Palmer, 1981:29-32. Sense contrasts with reference insofar as it is intralinguistic whereas reference is used to mean the relationship between these lexical items and the extralinguistic world.
4. The terms syntagmatic and paradigmatic were introduced by de Saussure (1916) to distinguish between the relationship between a linguistic item and another with which it cooccurs (syntagmatic) and the relationship between a linguistic item and the others which could occupy the same slot (paradigmatic).
5. While speakers generally use the same pronoun, T or V, for generic purposes as that which they have selected for indexical use, this is not always the case. Some generic expressions are fixed and always take a certain pronoun (see Grevisse 1986:1003); in other cases a speaker may choose the alternative pronoun for interactional purposes (see 4.3 and 4.4).
6. For a detailed discussion of the concepts of 'person' and 'pronoun' see Enríquez, 1984:29-99.
7. In the languages studied, deictic reference by third person personal pronouns is rarely used for interactional purposes although, in rare cases, it may be used for hearer reference, thus effecting extreme indirectness. For example:

Elle est contente à Tours?

said by a farmer's wife to a friend of her daughter. This could be glossed by:

Vous êtes-tu es contente à Tours?

See Grevisse, 1986:1004.

Nonetheless, given the marginal status of the third person personal pronoun (*il, elle, ils, elles* in French, *el, ella, ellos*,

ellos in Spanish' as a pronoun used for speaker/nearer reference, it will not be included in the model developed below.

8. For an outline of what is understood by componential analysis see Palmer (1933:109-114)
9. The classification of [\pm system] is grounded more in a grammatical rather than a semantic analysis of pronouns. Semantically, *on* has long found itself within the paradigm of personal pronouns and therefore a classification as [\pm system] is not of use in the present study.
10. Insofar as the purpose of this section of the study is to investigate questions of usage, some of the examples given will be concocted.
11. While we recognise that a given language is not monolithic and contains many varieties each of which may contain a different pronominal system and alternative rules of usage (this is the case for both the languages studied), this study will focus on the grammars of standard French and Peninsular Spanish as reported, for example, in the major dictionaries and grammars of the countries concerned (Diccionario de la Real Academia (1931), Moliner, (1988) Robert, (1973), Grevisse, (1986).
12. It would be possible to find a context for this utterance which overrode its apparent referential meaning. For example, the utterance could be made by a man in a jocular tone with the intention of mocking the impotence of a given women's protest action.
13. Macaulay (1974) points out that since the publication of Brown and Gilman's classical paper "The pronouns of power and solidarity" (1960), most research has been devoted to hearer-reference with a particular focus on the social and interactional functions of the 'pronouns of address'.
14. It is possible for a use of the first person singular pronoun not to be identical of the speaker, as in

elle me dit = elle me replace j'erais a Gerland ..

However, it is this use which calls for explanation rather than the range of other uses of *je*.
15. Payard (1977) is a table of endings for the indicative and subjunctive of French verbs. Harn (2001:10) (1957:514

INDICATIVE MOOD

d) <i>Present</i>	1.	o as a, amos áis an
	2.	o es e, emos éis en
	3.	o es e, imos ís en
e) <i>Imperfect</i>	1.	aba abas aba, ábamos abais aban
	2 & 3.	ía ías ía, íamos íais ían
f) <i>Past definite</i>	1.	é aste ó, amos asteis aron
	2 & 3.	í iste íó, imos isteis ieron
g) <i>Future</i> 1, 2 & 3.		é ás á, emos éis án
h) <i>Conditional</i> 1, 2 & 3.		ía ías ía, íamos íais ían

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

i) <i>Present</i>	1	e es e, emos éis en
	2 & 3.	a as a, amos áis an
j) <i>Imperfect</i>		ara aras ara, áramos arais aran
	1	ase ases ase, ásemos aseis asen
	2 & 3	iera ieras iera, léramos ieraiis ieran iese ieses iese, lésemos iesels iesen
k) <i>Future</i>	1.	are ares are, áremos areis aren
	2 & 3.	iere ieres iere, léremos iesels iesen

The numbers 1, 2 and 3 stand for the first conjugation, the second conjugation and the third conjugation respectively.

CHAPTER THREE SELECTION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA

3.0 Introduction

Given that the overall aim of this study is to investigate the contribution that Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory can make to an understanding of the use of personal pronominal reference in French and Spanish, the primary concern was to collect a corpus where there would be a clear threat to the faces of those participating in the interaction. This chapter will focus on the criteria employed for selecting the data and thence a description of the two corpora, the conventions adopted for its transcription and, finally, issues related to a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of it.

3.1 Selection of the data (1)

The main criteria guiding our choice of data initially related to the number of participants, the channel and variety of language and the type of speech event. In order to obtain speaker and hearer reference it was necessary to have a minimum group of two participants; the language had to be naturally-occurring; the variety of Spanish and French spoken had to correspond to the national standard;

and the speech event had to be of a type which was likely to lead to Face-Threatening-Acts.

An awareness of the phenomenon which Labov (1972) called 'the observer's paradox' (2) whereby the presence of the analyst may, for a variety of reasons, distort the data he or she is trying to obtain led towards the analysis of data selected from audiovisual media sources. As this material was produced for purposes other than those of linguistic analysis it would not be influenced by the analyst in any way. An initial corpus of material (3) in three languages, English, French and Spanish, was collected from unscripted broadcasts (as opposed to plays, soap operas, large parts of documentaries and the news) mainly consisting of interviews, debates, chat-shows and phone-in discussions. It was assumed that, because of the frequency with which disagreement (a fundamental FTA) occurs within this type of programme, that this would be an ideal site for the study of politeness features. Furthermore, given that all the types of programme outlined above involved two or more speakers, there would be ample opportunity for speakers to use personal reference. Furthermore, the material was readily available with the advent of satellite television.

After a preliminary study of this initial corpus, it was decided to use data from non-media sources for the following reasons.

Firstly, participant roles are very different when the setting is a recording studio. Bell (1984), in his article entitled 'Language Style as Audience Design', argues that a speaker's consideration of his or her audience is a major factor in determining stylistic choices. He identifies the following roles for the audience: the addressee (whose presence is known and ratified), the auditor (whose presence is known and ratified but who is not addressed by the speaker), the overhearer (whose presence is known) and the eavesdropper (whose presence is not known). In audience design, speakers accommodate primarily to their addressee, secondarily to auditors with overhearers affecting style to a lesser degree and eavesdroppers not at all. Thus, according to Bell (1984:177):

A mass media audience consists of addressees (the target audience), auditors (who are not targeted but are known to be receivers), and overhearers (who are effectively the entire remaining population, since a mass medium is defined by its general availability).

However, Bell goes on to suggest that:

Mass communication inverts the normal hierarchy of audience roles (...). In programmes with more than one participant (e.g. interviews) the mass auditors are likely to be more important to a communicator than the immediate addressee. Rather than invalidating

the addressee - auditor - overhearer hierarchy, however, it is precisely this reordering that is the site of mass communicators' difficulties in designing their utterances.

An example of this type of difficulty can be seen in the extract below taken from an edition of the phone-in programme *Tuesday Call* where there is a disagreement between the caller and the radio broadcaster, Barry Norman. The caller maintains that certain sequences in 'The Wizard of Oz' are too violent for her child aged three and a half and that the film should not have been awarded a Universal Certificate. The broadcaster suggests that three and a half is 'a little young for a film like that':

Caller: Yes, but does universal mean universal or...

Broadcaster: Absolutely no no no
I'm not I'm not I'm on your side I promise you I'm on
your side and as one who believes in protesting ...
vehemently why not write in to the British Board of Film
Censors?

Tuesday Call, Radio 4, 20.08.85

One interpretation of the extract above, in accordance with politeness theory, would be the following: the caller prefaces her question with 'yes but' (see Brown and Levinson, 1987:113), a token agreement with what the previous speaker has said in order to pay attention to the face of her interlocutor in challenging his assumed interpretation of 'universal'. This would be classified by

Brown and Levinson as Positive Politeness Strategy 6,
'Avoid disagreement'.

The broadcaster, feeling possibly that he has not been receptive enough to her opinion (and hence face) backtracks rapidly expressing instant agreement with the caller ('absolutely'), using hesitation (possibly marking his reluctance to impinge on the caller's face as in Brown and Levinson's Negative Politeness Strategy 6: Communicate S's want not to impinge on H (1987:187)), going on record as expressing solidarity with her view ('I'm on your side' as in Brown and Levinson's Positive Politeness Strategy 9: Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants (1987:125)), suggesting a possible way forward ('why not' as in Brown and Levinson's Positive Politeness Strategy 13: Give (or ask for) reasons, 187:128)).

This extract could possibly be classified as a 'site of mass communicator's difficulties' as outlined by Bell above. The dual role of the broadcaster i.e. giving a general opinion to the mass audience and giving an individual response to one speaker can generate conflict. In this instance it was not possible to reconcile the view that if you use a three and a half year old as a benchmark for certification of films, so few films may pass that this is not a useful measure with the need to reassure a parent who feels that the current system of certification

is inadequate. This conflict could have been the reason for the dysfluency evident in the response given.

This consciousness of an external audience is similar, in many ways, to 'the observer's paradox' where a speaker is conscious of wants external to the apparent purpose of the interaction. For, in a sociolinguistic interview, an informant may be aware that the analyst/interviewer is more interested in the form of the language (phonology and syntax) obtained than in the content of what is being said.

A second reason for discounting material from media sources was the nature of the speech events available. The bulk of unscripted broadcasts consists of interviews, whether these are one-to-one interviews or studio discussions (which for the reasons outlined above resemble interviews insofar as the addressee is an external audience). Milroy (1987:41) points out that the interview displays a number of features uncommon to normal interaction. For example, that 'from the interviewee's point of view, a cooperative response is often one which is maximally brief and relevant'. Conversely, a media interview may simply be a means of eliciting a monologue from the interviewee (4). The nature of the speech event licenses, for example, the use of direct questions whereas in everyday interactions these are often a site for some

kind of indirectness (see Goody, 1978). Furthermore, disagreement, normally a face-threatening-activity, is a desirable element in a TV interview, chat show or call-in programme, the avowed aim of which is to provide a forum for conflicting views (see Jucker, 1986). Thus, the goal of the participants is not to change the views or modify the behaviour of the other members of the discussion group or of the interviewer, but rather to present opinions to an audience consisting of mass auditors.

Given the complexities evident in the reordering of participant roles and in the atypical expected norms of interaction, and the consequences these would have for personal reference and for issues of politeness, it was decided not to use material from media sources.

It became essential to find material where the focus of attention of the participants was on a task involving the resolution of a conflict of interests and where the participants were not addressing an external audience.

We then turned our attention from broadcast data to language corpora which had been collected for the purposes of advanced language teaching and in particular to the corpora for the advanced language courses, *Lyon à la Une* and *Camino a Castilla* (5), for French and Spanish respectively which aimed to provide students with a

variety of naturally-occurring listening material. While the majority of this material consisted of monologues and interviews, there were a small number of recordings where the outcome of the speech event was crucial to the participants and where conflicting interests provided the motivation for the use of politeness strategies.

All these recordings were of editorial meetings consisting of two or more persons ensuring the presence of speaker and hearer participant roles. Their purpose was to arrive at decisions affecting the future actions of those present, thus implying the presence of a potential threat to face. All speakers were aware of the presence of the camera and camera crew, but these clearly fulfilled the role of the overhearer rather than auditor or addressee, thus minimizing the potential effects of 'the observer's paradox'. Furthermore, the talk was naturally-occurring.

The French corpus consists of one meeting lasting 40 minutes and the Spanish corpus consists of 4 separate meetings. It is our view that the size of the corpus is of less importance than the richness of the data obtained and, as we shall see, speaker hearer reference is encoded in the majority of utterances recorded. Some analysts, working with extensive corpora, have managed to isolate only infrequent occurrences of the variables under investigation. For example, Cheshire (in Milroy 1987:145)

conducted a complex analysis of relative pronouns on the basis of only 82 occurrences out of an extensive corpus. In addition to the materials described (3.2), we have, where relevant used and described, in the case of Spanish, further extracts from the *Camino a Castilla* (1991 and forthcoming) corpus.

3.2 Description of the data

The description of the data will be based on the approach adopted by Hymes (1962, 1972, 1974) and Saviile-Troike (1982).

All the data has been recorded on video tape. While it is not the purpose of this study to concentrate on paralinguistic features (such as gaze), reference may be made, where appropriate, to visual features of the context of situation. The main utility of video in this study has been as an aid to transcription, in particular in recordings where there are more than two participants.

All of the recordings are of a similar speech situation, that is an editorial meeting occurring in the place of work and all broadly encompass the same event (6), a meeting the purpose of which is to exchange information about (and possibly evaluate) the actions of participants and to plan future activities with a view to producing, as

a team, information (whether in the form of a newspaper or a news broadcast). In each recording the participants use the same code (i.e. French or Spanish) and this is relatively unmarked as regards regional features. All the participants are adults under the age of 65 and all are from the professional class. In the individual descriptions of the recordings below we shall concentrate on factors which might differentiate the recordings such as the number of participants, their relative status and role-relationships and the main communicative acts making up the interaction.

The corpus consists of the following recordings:

(i) Editorial meeting - *Lyon Matin*.

(ii) Editorial meeting - *Radio Cadena*.

(iii) Editorial meeting - *El Norte de Castilla*.

(iv) Editorial meeting - *El Norte de Castilla*.

(v) Editorial meeting - *El Norte de Castilla*.

3.2.1 Editorial Meeting - *Lyon Matin*

Lyon Matin is a major regional newspaper in southern France under the editorship, at the time of recording, of Jean-Louis Dousson who holds a regular, weekly meeting with his staff to shape the policy of the paper. His role as editor gives him the authority not only to manage the organization of the communicative event (by chairing) but also to impose his will on his predominantly male staff (by taking policy decisions). By chairing the meeting, the editor allocated turns to those who wished to speak and therefore the turn-taking mechanisms of this meeting are substantially different from those of the other meetings recorded. However, this did provide one distinct advantage: overlap was reduced to a minimum thus facilitating transcription (7). Out of the staff present, approximately 10 actively participated in the meeting, with the rest remaining silent. Of the participants, one is deputy editor, and thus enjoys greater institutional power, and the rest mainly represent two main groups, the journalists and the photographers. Of these two groups, the journalists enjoy higher status within the institution. Other factors that status may depend on are seniority, personality and gender. While the fact that the meeting is chaired increases the level of formality of the language used, the distance between the speakers is not great, and nor, in general, is the level of formality. Both T and V are used as address forms and while there is use of first name there is no use of honcrifics.

The main communicative acts in this recording are too numerous to record here, but included such potentially face-threatening acts as directives, complaints, reminders, disagreements, etc.. The communicative event as such can be broken down into the following main subsections:

- a review of the events and activities of the preceding week
- an invitation by the chair for participants to vent any problems they may have encountered
- an outline of what the staff will do over the succeeding week or more

3.2.2 Editorial meeting - *Radio Cadena*

This is a meeting between two male newscasters responsible for the daily news broadcasts at the station, *Radio Cadena*, one of a number of private radio stations operating at that time in the northern Spanish city of Valladolid. Such meetings take place on a daily basis and are more ad hoc than the meeting described above. The distance between the speakers is very low as is the level of formality and both speakers use the T form in address. As regards role-relationships, there is a clear difference

between the two speakers: one is the senior newscaster and his role is to allocate responsibilities in their joint preparation of the news. As such he is also responsible for managing the meeting as a speech event. The main communicative acts which occur in this event and are of interest to this study are directives.

3.2.3 Editorial meeting - *El Norte de Castilla*

This is a meeting between two male journalists responsible for national current affairs and has the purpose of deciding what will and what will not be included in the following day's newspaper. One is a senior journalist and it is his job to take any final decisions about what will be included and the importance it will be given. The level of formality is low and the speakers use mutual T for address. The main communicative acts of interest here concern the senior reporter's unwillingness to give any guarantees that he will authorize publication of an item of news his colleague is currently working on.

3.2.4 Editorial meeting - *El Norte de Castilla*

This is a meeting between a male and a female journalist responsible for international news. The male journalist is senior. The level of formality is low and the speakers use mutual T for address. The purpose of the meeting is as

above and the main communicative acts of interest to this study concern disagreements between both participants about the priorities to be given to different news items.

3.2.5 Editorial meeting - *El Norte de Castilla*

This is a meeting between a female and a male journalist responsible for the sports news. The female journalist is senior and is therefore responsible for establishing priorities and allocating tasks and responsibilities in the preparation of the following day's sports news. The level of formality is low and the form of address is mutual T. The main communicative acts of interest are those where the senior journalist directs the work of her junior.

In addition to these corpora, material is referred to from other sources (media and non-media) for illustrative purposes and will be described as appropriate.

3.3 Transcription of the data

Milroy (1987:117) in her advice on methodology, warns against too detailed a transcription at the pilot stage referring to Ochs (1979:44) who points out that transcription is invariably a selective process, reflecting underlying goals and assumptions. It is only

when the goals of the study are clear that the appropriate choices may be made.

For example, a decision needs to be taken regarding which notational system (phonetic or conventional) is to be adopted and which metalingual markers are to be retained. Given that this study is concerned with semantic and pragmatic aspects of discourse, taking as its starting point the grammatical category of person, there is no need for phonetic transcription. Furthermore, while there is no doubt that metalingual markers (such as pauses and prosody) are important elements of linguistic politeness (see Brown and Levinson, 1987:104) this study is not concerned with this level of analysis and therefore prosodic features will not be marked. The transcription will not reflect duration and location of overlap. Nonetheless, back-channelling (Yngve, 1970) and comprehensible overlap which does not entail a second speaker obtaining a turn has been bracketed within the body of the text.

One difficulty in the use of a transcript to investigate hearer interpretation is that the transcriber, as listener, has already had to choose, on occasion, between alternative, phonetically equivalent, transcriptions thus engaging in a prior degree of conversational inferencing. For example, the utterance:

Bon d'accord les *mères* viennent faire un tour presque tous les jours

had been transcribed initially as:

Bon d'accord les *mères* viennent faire un tour presque tous les jours.

Here, [mer] functions as a homonym for 'mother' and 'Mayor'. Only extralinguistic information can suggest the appropriate transcription.

Because of difficulties of this nature, the material was transcribed initially by French and Spanish native speakers. It was then checked by the analyst who identified those areas of transcription which were to be studied in greater depth. Any anomalies perceived in the initial transcription (on the basis of its conformity to the language system in question and to the context of the talk) were identified. These were subjected to other judges who were both native and near-native speakers of French and Spanish. Where there was agreement, the transcription recommended was adopted. Where not, a possible transcription or a blank was left and this is indicated by the use of square brackets. Where there is interruption and overlap, it is often difficult to disentangle what is being said and here too square brackets are used to indicate uncertainties and omissions.

Finally, in the event of hesitation, false starts and ellipsis, the transcriber is often tempted to make the transcription conform to a written model, ironing out what is perceived as unnecessary linguistic untidiness. Insofar as these features are all, potentially, components of politeness strategies they were retained in those parts of the transcription containing speaker/hearer reference although elsewhere the transcript has been simplified where there is substantial overlap to the extent that not all hesitations and false starts have been transcribed.

The transcripts of the video-recorded corpora are to be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

3.4 Analysis of the data: quantitative and qualitative methodologies

Although quantitative analysis has long been a tool in the study of sociolinguistic variables and has been particularly useful in attempts to associate speaker variables (sex, class, ethnicity, networks, etc.) with phonological variation (Labov, 1972, Trudgill, 1974, Romaine 1982, etc.), this methodology presents a number of problems (for a discussion of these, see Milroy 1987, Chapter 6).

The difficulties in applying quantitative approaches to syntactic data have been amply documented (see for example, García, 1983 & 1985). In addition to the difficulties involved in eliciting suitable data, there are further problems of analysis and interpretation (Milroy 1987:150). For example, Milroy points out the difficulty recognised by Labov in applying his 'principle of accountability' (which requires that all occurrences of a given variable are noted and where it has been possible to define the variable as a closed set of variants, all non-occurrences of the variant in relevant circumstances) insofar as it is often impossible to close the possible set of variants.

In any case a quantitative approach would be extremely difficult to apply to a study such as this where one area of interest is a possible relationship between choice of variant (personal reference) and communicative function (reduction of threat to face) rather than a speaker variable.

Lavandera (1978) (in Milroy, 1987:159) has pointed out that variants of 'syntactic variables' are not semantically equivalent taking as an example two supposedly synonymous syntactic constructions 'the liquor store was broken into' and 'they broke into the liquor store'. This is relevant to the study of personal

reference for, as was shown in Chapter Two, it is not possible to deal with personal pronouns as variants of each other for while this might be the case for one particular usage, every pronoun is bound up in other paradigms which cannot be disassociated from it. Secondly, while personal pronouns may form a closed set in grammatical terms, their deicticity means that this set is not closed in referential terms. For example, the following utterances could all have the same referent:

You haven't closed the door.

The door hasn't been closed.

Someone hasn't closed the door.

Who was brought up in a barn? etc.

Furthermore, in the case of Spanish, it is not always possible to isolate instances of zero-occurrence of the personal pronoun. Finally, even if the variables and their variants could be identified and quantified, it is not obvious how to interpret the scores obtained. A speaker may, for example, repeat a position-initial personal pronoun several times in an attempt to gain the floor whereas he or she may never use this pronoun in conjunction with certain significant verbs. Access to such context-dependent pronominal use cannot be gained through quantitative studies of this nature.

Problems concerning the definition of the communicative function are even more complex. It has been shown (1.4) that an FTA can be defined minimally by P, I and Wx and that the definition of each of these variables is, in turn, highly sensitive to both a social and an interpersonal context. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987, 1978) show that measures can be taken to redress threat to face which can address each of these variables individually or together. For example, a hearer can address an FTA by diminishing Distance between S&H (positive politeness) or increasing it (negative politeness). Furthermore, speakers and hearers are not 'thoroughly passive' as Lavandera (1988:10) has pointed out, but can use language actively to modify social contexts. Consequently, it is to be expected that speakers can use language to put on record their perceptions of power, distance and weight of the face-threatening-act just as much as external perceptions of these variables influence them to express themselves or to interpret utterances as they do.

In the light of what has been said above, the predominant focus of this study will be to engage in a qualitative analysis of the data. Nonetheless, we shall include, for the French study, a quantitative analysis of the occurrence of the set of speaker/hearer personal pronouns in our corpus and in the case of the Spanish data, refer

to extensive quantitative studies which have been carried out into the presence and absence of the personal pronoun thus combining a restricted quantitative approach with a mainly qualitative one. The justification for this mixed approach is that in French it is possible to close the set of pronominal forms under investigation here. While the results derived can only be taken as representative of the particular speech situation studied, it is hoped that the findings will raise issues to be addressed in the qualitative analysis. As regards Spanish, the area of pronominal reference has long been considered problematic with the result that there are a number of extensive quantitative studies of personal reference which, in themselves, raise issues of interest within the perspective of politeness theory.

3.5 Conclusion

To sum up, the aim in collecting data for this study was to record naturally-occurring talk where the relationship between personal reference and threat to face could be investigated. Media language was argued to be unsuitable for these purposes insofar as participant speaker hearer reference was seen to be subordinate to reference to non-participant auditors. This had implications not only for the ways in which speakers use personal reference but also for how threats to face were perceived and addressed.

Furthermore, the nature of the speech event available from the media imposed further norms of interaction which modified the use of speaker hearer reference and potential threat to face. The corpora finally selected consisted, therefore, of participant speakers and hearers and potential threat to face was ensured due to the type of speech event selected: meetings where conflicting interests had to be reconciled and where one individual had the executive power to take and enforce decisions.

The data was broadly described in terms of participant roles, status and interactional purposes and goals and further information will be provided, where relevant, in the analysis of the data in Chapters 4-6.

Given the focus on a grammatical variable (personal pronominal reference), a simple orthographical transcription was adopted where pausing, turn-taking, prosodics and similar paralinguistic features were not marked.

It was decided to subject the corpora to a predominantly qualitative analysis, adducing quantitative data where appropriate.

Chapter Three Notes

1. For a comprehensive overview of the issues relating to the collection of naturally-occurring speech data see Milroy, 1987, Chapter 3.
2. For a discussion the the different methods analysts have employed to address 'the observer's paradox', see Milroy, 1987:60-64.
3. The media extracts which formed a basis of this preliminary study included:

Tuesday Call (a BBC Radio 4 chat show where listeners telephone the panel in the studio and ask for information/advice or give their opinion about a particular topic)

Le téléphone sonne (A France Inter programme similar in nature to *Tuesday Call*)

Apostrophes (A literary programme appearing on French television with 6 participants including a chairperson who discuss a literary topic).

La Clave (A discussion programme appearing on Spanish television with approximately 8 participants including a chairperson who discuss a topic of current affairs).

Various interviews of politicians extracted from radio news broadcasts in all three languages

4. For a more comprehensive overview of media language see Bell 1991 who cites research by the following authors into the characteristics of the broadcast news interview: Blum-Kulka 1983, Heritage 1985, Jucker 1986, Greatbach 1988.
5. All the data is taken from these two corpora. *Lyon à la Une* was filmed on location in France in 1983 and produced as a language course in 1987. *Camino a Castilla* was filmed on location in Spain in 1987 and every attempt was made to gain parallel data to that obtained for French. Nonetheless, the structure and decision-making process of the local daily newspaper was found to be substantially different to that of *Lyon Matin* insofar as meetings were very rarely plenary and were generally held on an ad hoc basis whenever decisions needed to be taken. Thus we recorded a series of these meetings and supplemented them by a further recording, similar in nature, at a local radio station. Thus, while the two corpora are not directly comparable in terms of size and formality of the meeting, they do include what are essential components for this study: a speech situation where the speakers are constrained to use speaker/hearer reference and where there is a potential threat to face. The analyst was present during the recording of the Spanish corpus and while not present during the recording of the French corpus, has access to individuals who were.

6. According to Saville-Troike (1982) who bases her work on that of Hymes (1972), a speech event is "defined by a unified set of components throughout, with the same general purpose of communication, the same general topic, generally using the same language variety, maintaining the same tone or key and the same rules of interaction, in the same setting".
7. One meeting of three journalists responsible for the front page of the Spanish newspaper *El Norte de Castilla* contained high levels of overlap and thus proved too difficult to transcribe satisfactorily.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL PRONOMINAL REFERENCE IN A CORPUS OF NATURALLY-OCCURRING FRENCH: [JE] [NOUS] [TU] [VOUS]

4.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the contribution that politeness theory can make to an understanding of the use and interpretation of personal reference in French. In Chapter One we examined a number of pragmatic theories which seek to explain how speakers use and hearers interpret discourse in context and saw the importance of extra-linguistic knowledge in assigning meanings to utterances. Politeness, or more precisely, the need to redress potential threat to the face of the speaker or the hearer, was seen as a motivation for a speaker to depart from maximally efficient talk. One major strategy for face-redress outlined by Brown and Levinson was that of indirectness, another was that of establishing common ground between speaker and hearer.

Given that direct reference to the speaker or the hearer can be a potentially face-threatening act in itself (as, for example, in an utterance where a speaker is ordering a hearer to do something 'you, do that'), it is likely that in situations where there is a threat to face, speakers

will resort to more indirect forms of personal reference. Indeed, Brown and Levinson suggest a number of such strategies including, for example, impersonalisation and the inclusion of speaker and hearer in an activity.

In Chapter Two we proposed a model for examining speaker hearer reference and suggested a cline of pronominal indeterminacy ranging, in the case of French, from the highly determinate personal pronoun *je* to the highly indeterminate pronoun *on*. We also saw that, the greater the indeterminacy, the more potential values could be associated with the use of a given pronoun. For while context might suggest one single referent, a range of interpretations was still possible.

Thus a further aim of this chapter is to examine how speakers can exploit indeterminacy of reference in order to protect their own face and to redress threat to the face of others.

Given that the data collected (see 3.2.1) is from a situation containing a number of inherently face-threatening communicative acts, one initial hypothesis was that there would be a preference for a high level of indeterminacy in pronominal use. Therefore we carried out a quantitative study into the distribution of pronominal reference in the corpus. In addition to the subject

personal pronouns (included in the personal cline), we also included their alternative grammatical realizations, for example, reflexive, object, disjunctive pronouns. These are described below in the order that they appear on the personal cline.

(1) [JE] (1)

In this category are included, in addition to the subject pronoun *je*, the disjunctive pronouns *moi*, *moi-même*, the accusative and dative pronouns *me*, the possessive adjectives *mon*, *ma*, *mes* and the possessive pronouns *le mien*, *la mienne*, *les miens*, *les miennes*.

Given that these are formal categories, we have included instances of first person singular pronouns even where contextual factors suggest strongly that they are not used to refer to the speaker. Thus we have included those pronouns where pragmatically there is a shift of reference with the speaker temporarily assuming, through the use of [JE] the persona of a third person, e.g.

- (1) ...sauf ceux qui passaient qui venaient nous voir tiens j'ai vu
des lumières je me suis arrêté (2)

(11) [NOUS]

This category also includes the disjunctive pronouns *nous*, *nous-même*, the accusative and dative pronouns *nous*, the possessive adjectives *notre*, *nos* and the possessive pronouns *le nôtre*, *la nôtre*, *les nôtres*. Also included is the first person plural verbal form for the imperative mood, e.g.

(2) mettons

(iii) [TU]

As above, we also include the disjunctive pronouns *toi* and *toi-même*, the accusative and dative pronouns *te*, the possessive adjectives *ton*, *ta*, *tes* and the possessive pronouns *le tien*, *la tienne*, *les tiens*, *les tiennes*. Also included is the second person singular verbal form which marks the imperative mood, e.g.

(3) fais pas de problème

(iv) [VOUS]

This category also includes the disjunctive pronouns *vous*, *vous-même(s)*, the accusative and dative pronouns *vous*, the possessive adjectives *votre*, *vos* and the possessive pronouns *le vôtre*, *la vôtre*, *les vôtres*. We have also included the second person plural verbal form marking the imperative mood, e.g.

(4) n'oubliez pas

(v) [ON]

This category also includes the disjunctive pronouns *soi, soi-même*. However, we have not included the reflexive pronoun *se*, the possessive adjectives *son, sa, ses* and the possessive pronouns *le sien, la sienne, les siens, les siennes* for these forms also represent a third person category [IL(S)]/[ELLE(S)] which has not been included in our analysis insofar as these pronouns are not commonly used for speaker/hearer reference. Furthermore, no object or indirect object pronouns exist for [ON]: the speaker selects from the other categories according to the intended referent, for example, *on voulait qu'il nous rende visite*. Therefore it is only the subject pronoun subcategory which can be included in a quantitative study for the purposes of this analysis.

While there is a wide range of impersonal linguistic devices which can be used for speaker/hearer reference (e.g. *quelqu'un, il faut* + verb, etc.) and which occur in our corpus, these also cannot be formally defined and therefore will not be included in this part of the

study. However, these will be examined in 5.5 from a qualitative perspective.

Given the fact that [ON] functions differently from the other personal pronouns included in this study insofar as it does not have its own direct and indirect object pronouns and it shares a number of its realizations with the category of third person reference, it was decided to provide two quantitative tables, one (Table 1) showing subject personal pronominal reference (and therefore placing [ON] on the same footing as the other personal pronouns) and one (Table 2) quantifying all the realizations identified above for the pronouns [JE], [NOUS], [TU] and [VOUS], i.e. including forms such as *moi*, *mon*, *notre*, etc..

The two tables below illustrate personal pronominal reference within the corpus in terms of subject pronominal reference (Table 1) and in terms of all pronominal reference (Table 2). Given the nature of the speech event described (3.2.1), it was expected that, if speakers wished to pay attention to the face of their hearers and to protect their own, they would resort to the more indeterminate pronominal forms and tend to avoid the more determinate forms.

Table 1 Personal reference by subject pronoun

Pronoun	No. of occurrences	% frequency
1. JE	161	44.4
2. NOUS	2	0.6
3. TU	22	6.0
4. VOUS	15	4.1
5. ON	163	44.9
Total	363	100.0%

Table 2 Personal reference by all personal pronouns (excluding [ON])

Pronoun	No. of occurrences	% frequency
1. JE	228	66.1
2. NOUS	45	13.0
3. TU	30	8.7
4. VOUS	42	12.2
Total	345	100.00

What is immediately striking about the figures in Table 1 is not only the high frequency of the indeterminate pronoun *on* (44.4%) but also the extremely high frequency of occurrence of the most determinate pronoun *je* (44.9%) and the proportionately low frequency of occurrence of all other personal pronouns. If we look at Table 2 the disparity between those pronouns grammatically encoding speaker reference ([JE] and [NOUS] : 79.1%) and those encoding hearer reference ([TU] and [VOUS] : 20.9%) is also striking. It appears from these figures, therefore, that while speakers may

indeed avoid direct reference to hearers, among other factors, conventional strictures of modesty, that is avoiding reference to oneself, do not appear to obtain. We already alluded to the limitations of such quantitative studies (see 3.4), whether small-scale or otherwise, in providing explanations for speech behaviour. Nonetheless, these figures do raise a number of questions about the data. Is there any pattern to the high frequency of occurrence of speaker reference? In what circumstances does hearer reference arise and, most interestingly, where does *on* fit into the referential field of the communicative event? In the remainder of this chapter we shall concentrate on speaker/hearer reference by means of the four pronouns which grammatically encode this ([JE], [NOUS], [TU] and [VOUS]) and in Chapter Five we shall examine the use and interpretation of the indeterminate pronoun [ON] and supplement this with reference to other non-personal pronominal forms of reference to be found in the data.

4.1 The use of [JE]

4.1.1 Introduction

Most grammars of French for anglophone learners (e.g. Ferrar 1955) do not give any guidance regarding the

usage of *je* doubtless because they consider it to be parallel with that of 'I' in English. Judge and Healey (1983:68) (3) largely corroborate this view but point to one area of difference between usage in English and in French. They state:

Je rarely presents problems, although it is less used in formal written language than the English 'I'. The French classical tradition has encouraged the sentiment, first enunciated by Blaise Pascal, that *le moi est haïssable*, and that the 1st person pronouns should be replaced by the more modest-seeming *nous* or *on*, together with a corresponding change in the person of the verb.

Thus politeness is presented as being at the root of one of the potential problems the learner might face in tackling the written language. However, it is not necessarily possible to extrapolate from the written to the spoken language and indeed Chafe has argued (1982:46) that, in the case of English, the frequency of first person reference (he includes both singular and plural reference in his study) is substantially higher in spoken than in written data (4). In this section we shall seek to account for the high frequency of use of the first person singular pronoun evident in our data and also, in later sections (4.2 and 5.3), investigate how the 'more modest-seeming *nous* or *on*' can be used in spoken interaction where the referent is, indeed, the speaker.

As we have already seen (2.3.1), [JE] is the most determinate of pronouns as the referent is normally the

speaker of the utterance. For the purposes of the quantitative studies we shall separate the use of the subject pronoun (Table 1) from that of other realizations (Table 2) for much the same reasons as we placed the first person singular form *je* at the head of the personal cline. The subject form places the referent as agent in a state, event or process described by an utterance whereas the object, disjunctive and possessive pronouns and the determiner create more indirect relationships between the referent and these states, events and processes. One exception to this is the disjunctive pronoun *moi* used pleonastically in apposition to the subject or object pronoun as in:

(5) *moi j'avais un horaire*

(6) *moi ça m'inquiète*

The use of this pronoun will be discussed in 4.1.(1).

What was particularly striking about the 161 occurrences of [JE] as subject pronoun in our data was the high proportion (58.4%) which co-occur with a verb which is used to hedge the propositional value of the utterance. Brown and Levinson (1978:150) use the following definition of a hedge:

a 'hedge' is a particle, word or phrase that modifies the degree of

membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is *partial*, or true only in certain respects...

Thus, in the following utterance,

(7) *je ne suis pas sûr qu'on puisse le faire*

je ne suis pas sûr que functions as a hedge on the quality of the propositional content of *on peut le faire*, the main verb being *pouvoir*. Thereby speaker modifies his or her degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition. This contrasts with the propositional use of *je*, for example:

(8) *je lui ai posé une question*

where the main verb is *poser*, 'to ask' (a question), an external activity for the speaker, which, given that it is expressed in the past tense in this example, is potentially verifiable by the hearer. Thus 'quality' hedges include those which modify the degree of commitment to the truth or falsity of a proposition.

The category of hedges also includes verbs expressing the attitude of the speaker, for example,

(9) *je suis navré*

(10) *je regrette*

The category of 'attitude' hedges includes verbs expressing the feelings of a speaker towards a given proposition.

A further category of hedges is that of explicit performatives where the speaker puts on record his or her commitment to propositions arising within the communicative event, for example:

(11) je vous préviens même à la rentrée ça va être dramatique

(12) oui je ne dis pas le contraire mais...

A 'performative' hedge is unlike a 'quality' hedge insofar as it expresses a positive commitment of a speaker to a proposition.

Table 3 below shows the frequency of occurrence of pronominal reference in the categories outlined above.

Table 3 [JE] and type of verb

Type of verb	subject pronoun	other pronoun	total
'Quality' hedge	54	16	70
'Attitude' hedge	9	8	17
'Performative' hedge	31	14	45
Total hedges	94	38	132
[JE] + Main verb	67	29	96
Total	161	67	228

In section 4.1.2 we shall first examine the use of [JE] with 'quality', 'attitude' and 'performative' hedges and finally with main verbs.

4.1.2 Hedges

It seems that use of the particle *moi* as a 'redundant' pronoun (Grévisse, 1986:1012) fits very closely the description of a hedge given above. *Moi* has no propositional value insofar as it merely repeats information encoded in the subject or object pronoun. Its primary function is one of emphasis or contrast (Byrne and Churchill, 1987:144) which seem to be two sides of the same concept (see Chapter 6). When the pronoun is used for contrast, the speaker is contrasted with one or more other individuals. This can be seen in the following example where a photographer is explaining why he did not, unlike another photographer, come away with a shot of a crowd

scene:

(13) P: ... *il* a fait sa vue de foule *moi* je pouvais pas
rester

Here the use of *moi* highlights the fact that the other photographer (11) had indeed been in a position to stay whereas the speaker could not.

In the following example it could be said that the pronoun *moi* is being used for emphatic purposes:

(14) D: *moi* je crois simplement que quand on est au programme de
quartiers....

Nonetheless, this could be classified simply as a weaker form of contrast: that this individual, unlike others unspecified, holds a certain belief.

It is the power of this 'redundant' *moi* to single out the speaker and to set him/her against another individual/group which makes it a useful resource for politeness. Negative politeness is predicated on the need not to impinge on others or to assume that their actions or beliefs are necessarily the same as the speaker's own. Positive politeness seeks to build common ground between speaker and hearer. Now, Brown and Levinson include hedges as part of the strategies available for both positive

politeness where 'intensifying modifiers' fulfill the sub-
 strategy of exaggerating (interest, approval, sympathy
 with H) (1987:104) and more normally for negative
 politeness where they modify the expression of
 communicative intentions (1987:145). Thus the effect of
 the addition of the particle *moi* to the hedge *je crois* may
 simply serve to further indicate that this is the
 speaker's and only the speaker's opinion and that the
 hearer is not presumed to share it. Alternatively, the
 speaker is exaggerating the interest of what he has to say
 with the intention of being positively polite. On the
 basis of Brown and Levinson's definition it is not
 possible to categorise the use of *moi* as either a positive
 or a negative politeness strategy at utterance level or to
 decide that politeness is indeed its primary function
 (unlike for example the limitation of criminal
 responsibility). However, it does, in our view, conform to
 their definition of a hedge insofar as it modifies the
 subject pronoun *je*.

There is a further problem with the notion of hedges. For
 Brown and Levinson (1987:146) hedges can be divided into
 two categories:

strengtheners (those that mainly act as emphatic hedges, 'exactly'
 or 'precisely' or 'emphatically') and *weakeners* (those that soften
 or tentativize what they modify); no clear meaning exists for most
 of these, but in one way or another they all indicate something

about the speaker's commitment towards what he is saying, and in so doing modify the illocutionary force.

On the basis of this definition, they classify a number of particles in Tzeltal, Tamil and English into either strengtheners or weakeners. However, there is a problem with applying such a classification to the French data. For example, when Jean-Paul, a relatively powerless individual in terms of the meeting, asks whether anything has been said officially about another meeting he has missed, he prefaces his request by explaining that he has been on leave for three days (appealing to the maxim of relevance) and reinforces this with an apologetic:

(15) JP: ...*moi je débarque* alors si ça avait été dit...

The hearer would be likely to classify the use of *moi* as a weakener. His incomplete utterance contains the implication that if the matter has already been discussed, they do not need to deal with it again just for him. Within the speech situation he does not have the right to raise a topic in the meeting which is relevant to him alone but must rely on the goodwill of the others to inform him.

However, when Dousson is issuing a warning about the dangers of losing readers and says:

(16) D: *moi je vous dis qu'on va arrêter complètement parce que on perd de la place*

Here the hearer is more likely, knowing the status of Dousson in the meeting and his experience of such matters, to assume that the particle *moi* is serving as a strengthener rather than a weakener. Dousson may indeed be using the particle *moi* to appeal to his status in order to reinforce the illocutionary force of the warning he is giving. Furthermore, as editor, he has the right to take executive decisions on behalf of the newspaper. However, in both these cases it is not the particle itself but rather the status of the speaker and their rights within the communicative event which lead to one or other definition.

It is our contention, therefore, in what follows, that it is pragmatic factors (such as, for example, knowledge of participant roles) rather than those intrinsic to linguistic resources themselves (in this case the role of *moi* as a hedge) which determine whether a hedge is interpreted as a strengthener or a weakener in a given context of utterance.

4.1.3 'Quality' hedges

As noted above, these are hedges addressed to the Gricean maxim of Quality and serve to limit the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition. Table 4 below shows the 'quality' hedges which occurred in the corpus:

Table 4 'Quality' hedges

je crois que (etc)	27
je pense que (etc)	13
je ne sais pas que (etc)	6
je trouve que	2
je ne me rappelle	3
je ne suis pas sûr que	3
je suis bien d'accord	2
je me souviens bien	1
me paraît/paraissait	5
à mon avis	4
si mes souvenirs sont exacts	1
pour moi c'était clair	1
ma foi	2
Total	70

Brown & Levinson point out that hedges addressed to the quality maxim can serve a variety of purposes: they can be used to limit criminal liability (they provide examples from the Watergate transcripts (1987:165)); to convey a genuine lack of knowledge about a proposition, etc.; as well as to serve both positive and negative politeness strategies. They provide a convincing argument in favour of the extensive use of hedges for the purposes of negative politeness. Interactional threat may come from the assumptions held by a speaker about an addressee (e.g.

that s/he can and is willing to do what S wants, that s/he wants something done and would prefer H to do it etc.). By hedging and thereby avoiding committing oneself to one's propositions, S is able to disarm this interactional threat. For example in the utterance:

(17) (L) *là je crois là je crois qu'il faut qu'il faudrait donc...*

the hedge *je crois* ('I think') can serve to attenuate the illocutionary force of *il faut* ('it is necessary to') and give the speaker an 'out' if this proposition is challenged. The speaker can always argue (amongst other arguments) that the real illocutionary force of the utterance was to invite reasons for not adopting the strategy proposed. Thus the speaker can always disassociate him or herself from the force of the proposition.

In our data, hedges appear to have been used for a variety of purposes. In the following extract the hedge *je crois que* has probably been used to convey a lack of hard and fast knowledge about a fact:

(18) (B) le maire d'arrondissement et des dépositaires on les invite quand + mercredi soir ou jeudi soir?

(L) *je crois que c'est c'est mercredi en principe*

(B) mercredi bon mercredi bon OK on ira oui d'accord

However, in the following extract there could be grounds for assuming that the speaker has used hedging primarily as a politeness device:

- (19) *Pl. je pense qu'on avait parlé aussi avec Albert et j'aimerais bien qu'il dise un mot peut-être sur ce qu'on avait commencé à débattre*

The speaker (a photographer who does not have the institutional power of the editor or the senior journalists) is proposing another item to be discussed and introducing a third party into the debate. Given that it is the role of Dousson (see 3.2.1) to select speakers and to nominate topics for discussion (although he has requested colleagues to supply these), this request, on the part of the photographer, is potentially a FTA. It is conceivable, therefore, that he is using negative politeness strategies in a situation where he feels that he does not have the authority to determine how the meeting is run.

For example, it is unlikely that the hedge *je pense que* conveys a lack of knowledge on the part of the speaker, i.e. that he is not sure whether he has talked about the matter with Albert and probably Dousson himself. For the fact that this discussion has actually taken place is presupposed in the utterance when the speaker says *ce qu'on avait commencé à débattre*. He also hedges his

request that Albert be allowed to speak using an attitudinal verb in the conditional tense (*j'aimerais* *que*), minimising the imposition (*dire un mot*) and tentativizing the whole statement with *peut-être*. Thus the photographer, in effect, mitigates any presumption on his part that he has a right to invite the next speaker and that that speaker, Albert, would indeed be willing to speak. Whether this was the speaker's intention or not, the analysis, in terms of politeness theory, is pragmatically plausible given knowledge about participants' past actions, the context of the speech event and the role and status of the speaker concerned.

We have already looked at the division, by Brown and Levinson, of hedges into the two categories of 'strengtheners' and 'weakeners'. It was argued that it is only possible to assign a 'quality' hedge to one of these categories on the basis of pragmatic knowledge. For Doussier to preface his remarks by *à mon avis* may well add force to his utterance by appealing to the hearers' respect for his experience (a basis for his power). For, say, a junior photographer to do so could well have the opposite effect of tentativizing the force of the utterance. However, in both cases the hedge serves the same purpose: to protect the face of the speaker and disarm any accusation of presumptive behaviour by putting on record the speaker's admission of his/her own

shortcomings (lack of or faulty knowledge, etc.). That this face-protection is purely conventional in terms of linguistic form can be seen in the following example where the editor, Dousson, is forcefully reiterating the paper's policy concerning the use of photographers. This turn, which will be analysed in greater depth in 5.3.3, contains a series of FTAs addressed at individuals and groups present at the meeting. At one point Dousson states:

- (20) (D) ...on avait dit qu'on envoyait un photographe
systématiquement tous les jours à dix-huit heures pour *moi*
c'était clair

The use of *pour moi* in this context can be classified as a strengthener given what is known about the speaker and the context, and as such constitutes a FTA in itself. For the conversational implication of this utterance is that if the policy was clear to the speaker, why do others have difficulty in understanding it, let alone implementing it? Here, a hedge on the quality of a proposition, which potentially indicates faulty or incomplete knowledge on the part of the speaker, is used to implicate lack of knowledge on the part of the hearer.

4.1.3 (i) Concluding remarks

Thus it appears that the interpretation of a hedge derives less from its linguistic form than from the perceived

'quality' of the speaker. Hearers will make assumptions about the state of knowledge of the speaker, their interactional goals and their status in relation to achieving these. It is therefore their ambiguity which allows hedges to function as a politeness device and to defuse the potential threat to face of self-reference.

4.1.4 'Attitude' hedges

The second category includes those verbs which serve to encode the attitude of the speaker towards a particular proposition. While this category is relatively small with only 15 occurrences, it is interesting from the point of view of politeness.

Table 5 'Attitude' hedges

je suis navré	2
je regrette	1
je suis désolé	2
j'entends bien	2
j'aime(raie) bien	3
je préfère	2
x m'inquiète un peu	1
x m'intéresse pas	1
x ne me concerne pas	1
	<hr/>
	15
Total	

This category overlaps to a certain extent with the category of 'quality' hedges insofar as a hedge may in

turn be modified by an adverb or adverbial phrase and therefore both modify a proposition and encode attitude towards it, e.g.

(21) (D) je crois *hélas*

(22) (D) je crois *malheureusement*

There are only two of these hedges and they have been quantified under 'quality' hedges, although they will be discussed in this section.

Personal attitude and mental states are paradigmatically an A event, that is, an event the truth or falsity of which can only be known by the speaker (A): only speakers can know if they are sorry, in pain, etc. Therefore, like hedges, attitudinal markers can serve to protect propositions from challenge (and thus protect the face of the speaker), the authenticity of an individual's inner feelings not being available for scrutiny.

Furthermore, certain attitudinal markers (e.g. conventional means of conveying apologies) can serve to communicate S's wish not to impinge on H and therefore are oriented towards saving H's face. For Brown and Levinson (1987:187-190) apologies are a major negative politeness strategy which they classify in the same category as the disassociation of S and H from a particular FTA. However, at the same time, apologies constitute a threat to S's

positive face. It appears that the use of attitudinal hedges can enable the speaker to reconcile these conflicting threats. For, unless the speaker uses an unambiguous performative verb, an apology is interpreted as such by conversational implicature. In English for example, there is a substantial difference between 'I apologize' which is a performative verb (and which gives no insight into the attitude of the speaker) and 'I'm sorry' or 'I regret' which are declarations by the speaker of a state of mind, conventionally used by speakers for apologies. However, there are two principal implicatures in a declaration such as 'I'm sorry'; the speaker is sorry about an action which has happened to an interlocutor; and also is sorry at the loss of face that this action has occasioned him or her. When a politician (5), for example, states that 'he regrets what has happened' the ambiguity allows him to imply conversationally that he is sorry about some alleged misconduct on his part. Another implicature would be that he regrets that this misconduct has been discovered and given rise to serious personal consequences for himself and wishes things were otherwise. He has protected his own face while not admitting any guilt on his own part (which an apology would do). So it can be said that statements of attitude can provide face-protection insofar as they are ultimately unverifiable.

In the remainder of this section we shall look at a number of examples where the use of the first person singular with a verb of attitude is significant in terms of politeness.

Examples (23) to (26) below are all taken from face-threatening acts deriving essentially from a major disagreement between two journalists Jean-Pierre and an unidentified woman on the one hand and Dousson, the editor, on the other. When the editor refuses categorically to consider moving the cinema column from its traditional slot on Wednesday, he prefaces his refusal on three occasions with a formulaic apology and on a further occasion with a declaration that he fully appreciates the arguments of his opponent before reiterating his point of view:

(23) (D) *je suis navré* aussi c'est une organisation interne

(24) (D) si vous donnez vos papiers en vrac *je suis désolé* faudra
jamais dire

(25) (D) *je suis navré* le mercredi c'est priorité au cinéma on ne peut
pas changer

(26) (D) *j'entends bien Jean-Pierre j'entends bien* ceci étant le
cinéma tout le monde y va

All these utterances do indeed have the effect of dissociating the speaker and the hearer from the proposition and as such function in a very different way from the 'quality' hedges examined above. In particular,

examples (23) and (26) carry the conversational implicature that Dousson and his interlocutor share the same attitude: in (23) the use of *aussi* can imply that Dousson is as upset as the woman who raised the complaint; in (26) the use of *j'entends bien* implies that Dousson shares Jean-Pierre's view. In both examples, the implication is that it is factors outside Dousson's control which are responsible for the state of affairs at the heart of the disagreement and not simply Dousson's will. However, insofar as Dousson's states of mind are inaccessible to his hearer, the above is a 'charitable' reading of his stated attitude. Indeed, in (23) there are a number of reasons why Dousson might be sorry, for example, that the journalist has raised the issue and is unwilling to accept his view. In examples (24) and (25) the hedges *je suis navré* and *je suis désolé* appear to be formulaic way of prefacing a dispreferred response, that is a refusal to change policy. In all cases, it appears that the speaker is using attitudinal hedges to pay respect to the face of the hearer by implying that he has the hearer's best interests at heart, prior to committing a major FTA.

In the following exchange, both speakers (the editor Dousson and the features editor Guillot) use expressions of regret with the effect of disassociating themselves from responsibility for a state of affairs:

- (27) (G) ...*je regrette* et si on n'a pas un qui est affecté aux faits divers on tournera pas cet été
- (D) *je crois* *hélas* qu'il n'y en aura pas d'affecté spécifiquement aux faits divers
- (G) eh bien autrement là avec un gars de jour et un gars de nuit ma foi on verra bien ce qui en découlera s'il y a des problèmes mais j'ai tout repoussé d'un calendrier à un autre pour se débrouiller en été c'est pas possible
- (D) non *je crois* *que malheureusement* on peut pas on peut pas (mais je je) il y a deux stagiaires d'été on peut pas en affecter un au service faits divers
- (G) OK *je suis désolé*

It is Guillot's contention that if Dousson does not give him extra staffing, his service will break down over the summer period and he uses his expressions of regret to disclaim any responsibility for this state of affairs. Dousson, for his part, also uses expressions of regret to disclaim responsibility for refusing to solve this situation in the way suggested by Guillot. Given that it is Dousson's responsibility to solve this problem and ensure that there is a features service over the summer, Guillot's final expression of regret could be easily interpreted as a threat or a challenge. The use of the attitudinal hedge conventionally protects Guillot's face by implying that he is apologizing for being unable to maintain the service over the summer. However, this apology must be interpreted in the light of contextual factors: another conversational implicature is that the ultimate responsibility is on the part of the editor and

therefore any apology ought to come from him. In this extract the potential afforded by attitudinal hedges for face protection through the disassociation of the personal role of the speaker from his or her institutional role is apparent.

There are also three occasions when a speaker expresses a negative evaluation of a proposition X: that it is worrying, irrelevant or uninteresting.

(28) X m'inquiète un peu

(29) X m'intéresse pas

(30) X ne me concerne pas

In all these examples the agent is defocussed in relation to the proposition. Brown and Levinson (1987:194-5) suggest that constructions such as these tend to be used in potential FTA situations and hypothesize (1987:274) that the basic motive for these is subject demotion rather than object promotion. While there is not sufficient data in our corpus to discuss this issue further, it is one which merits further attention.

In this section we saw how attitudinal hedges, due to their essentially unverifiable nature, could be used as a conventional politeness device in face-threatening

situations.

4.1.5 'Performative' hedges

Chapter One (1.1.1) looked at Austin's (1962) definition of performatives as a special class of utterances not used to make true/false statements but rather to do things (I object, I name this ship, etc.). Thus, in addition to consecrating certain actions, performatives could be said to serve the metalinguistic function of putting on record the illocutionary force of a speech act. It is in this way that they function as a hedge on the Gricean maxim of Manner by making clear the ostensible communicative intentions of the speaker. Table 6 illustrates the performatives which featured in the corpus:

Table 6 'Performative' hedges

je dis que etc.	7
je vous signale	2
je vous préviens	2
je vous renvoie	1
je vous cache pas	1
je rejoins	1
j'avoue	2
je vais parler	1
je parle de	1
je vais vous poser 3 questions	1
je n'ai pas à reparler de	1
je me couvre	1
j'ouvre ma bouche	1
j'en parlerai	1
je vous en supplie	1

24

Brown and Levinson (1987:190) suggest that forms like 'I tell you that it is so' (...) are conversationally unusual in contrast to the more expectable (...) 'It is so' and explain this tendency by arguing that a speaker will want to reduce threat to the face of the speaker and hearer by avoiding the pronouns 'I' and 'you'. Thus they suggest that motivations of politeness will override the need for clarity. It should be surprising, therefore, that in our data there is a significant number of occurrences of first person performatives of which 33% also encode reference to the hearer. However, there are two factors which may explain this: the purpose of the communicative event is one which might be argued to favour clarity over politeness; furthermore, it may be the case that traditional rhetorical devices are more frequently used in argumentation in French than in English. While this is a whole area which needs further investigation, it nonetheless illustrates the danger of generalising from one language situation to another and from one language code to another.

In 4.1.2 we argued that the classification of a hedge as a strengthener or a weakener depended on pragmatic rather than intrinsically linguistic factors. In the case of performative hedges it will be argued that a performative can only act as a strengthener. Furthermore, it will be argued that the use of the performative illustrates the

argument (5.2.2) that not only do extralinguistic factors such as power and distance help to interpret linguistic utterances but that linguistic utterances can help to create extralinguistic factors.

As was seen in Chapter One (1.1.1), for a performative to succeed it must fulfil a series of felicity conditions. To use a performative therefore is to highlight the felicity conditions which guarantee its success. In the examples we have isolated above, felicity conditions consist of the right of the speaker, by virtue of his or her role in Lyon Marin and within the meeting, to perform the speech act in question. Consider the following example, where Dousson uses a performative to tell the meeting that if the paper follows a certain course of action it will end up closing down:

(31) (D) *moi je vous dis qu'on va arrêter complètement*

Here, by making explicit the roles of the speaker and hearer (*moi, je* and *vous*), Dousson is putting on record his commitment to a proposition and appealing to his role and status opposed to that of the hearer as support for this opinion. At the same time he is also asserting his authority within the meeting. Guillot, who does not have the same institutional power as Dousson but who still has more status than any other individual at the meeting apart

from Bernard, also uses performatives to lend authority to his views. For example, when he insists that the coverage of a Supertramp concert should be a priority, he says:

- (32) (G) *je dis quand même que c'est plus important... après les autres en pensent ce qu'ils veulent*

The conversational implicature here is that he, Guillot, is in the best position to make this statement. Thus, the use of a strengthener claims authority for himself. This use of performatives could be seen as a high-risk strategy, for if the speaker is successfully challenged then he or she risks a serious loss of face. For, unlike a 'quality' hedge, a 'performative' hedge of this nature provides no protection for the face of the speaker. The pay-off for the speaker is one of increased authority.

A performative hedge can also function as a face-saving device where there is a mismatch between the implied illocutionary force of an utterance and that which is claimed for it through the use of the performative. For example, Dousson pays attention to the face of his interlocutor(s) when he insists on following through a certain project.

- (33) (D) *c'est une idée qu'il faut bien qui doit rester ici je vous supplie*

While he has the authority to enforce his opinion, he uses a performative to put on record that this is a plea rather than an order. Guillot uses a similar strategy:

- (34) (G) ...alors au mois de juillet faudra pas manquer les variétés
moi je vous préviens je suis pas là si c'est pour faire dix
lignes de photos comme certaines fois je vous dis tout de
suite vaut mieux ne rien faire

Guillot asserts *faudra pas manquer les variétés* and qualifies the illocutionary force of this act which might be interpreted as an order by stating that he is giving a warning *moi je vous préviens*. Here the hedge can serve two functions: it can protect the speaker's face in the event that the hearer does not believe that the speaker fulfils the felicity conditions for issuing an order; at the same time it can act as a strengthener for the speaker's proposition.

In this section we have seen that performatives, which, counter to expectation, occurred relatively frequently within our corpus, can be used to reduce threat to the face of the hearer where the speech act implied by the performative was less threatening than that implied by the utterance itself. Furthermore, it was argued that performatives could be used by a speaker to claim authority for a speech act. While the perceived authority of the speaker lends authority to the communicative act,

at the same time a speaker can use performatives to maintain or claim authority within a speech situation.

4.1.6 The use of [JE] with a main verb

Table 3 showed that there were 67 occurrences of the subject pronoun [JE] with a main verb, that is only 41.6% of the total uses of [JE]. Of these occurrences the majority serve to describe past, present and future actions of the speakers relevant to the meeting. For example, one photographer uses the subject pronoun in this way to refer to himself 10 times during two turns when he is recounting an incident illustrating the difference in approach between their newspaper and their chief competitor. However, there was one use of the first person singular pronoun of interest from the point of view of politeness, that is to refer to a third person or to refer to the speaker at a different point of time. 21% of occurrences of [JE] with a main verb involved a deictic shift of this nature.

In the following example, the speaker, for narrative purposes, assumes the persona of another individual. For example:

- (35) (P1) *sauf ceux qui passaient qui venaient nous voir tiens j'ai
vu des des des lumières je me suis arrêté*

- (36) (P1) elle me dit eun. *je me deplace j'étais à [Gerland] elle travaille sur [Gerland]*

In both these utterances *je* functions as an anaphoric cohesive device rather than as a deictic pronoun, referring back in (35) to one of the individuals making up *ceux* and in example (36) to *elle*. A hearer, working on the Gricean assumption that the speaker is being relevant, would have no difficulty in assigning a referent to this use of *je*. Within Brown and Levinson's (1987:106, 118) model such a style-shift would form part of the super-strategy of positive politeness: the speaker, by effecting, in this case a dual point of view operation (from past to present time and from third person to first person), intensifies the interest to the hearer of the events being recounted. There were only nine such occurrences in our data of which 5 were of the subject pronoun.

Speakers can also use a point of view operation to recount events where they were principal agents. For example, the features editor Guillot uses this 'vivid present' to recount how he prevented a serious problem at the newspaper and to suggest a future policy to prevent its reoccurrence:

- (37) (G) et en même temps *je découvre* qu'on distribue des disques
moi la maison des disques quand ils m'appellent je leur dis

non vos disques vous les gardez alors il faudrait une unité
et ça c'est pour les spectacles pour les faits divers

For a speaker to recount an incident where she or he is presenting her or himself very favourably compared to other unnamed individuals (who are possibly present at the meeting) is potentially threatening to the face of those hearer(s) who are receiving an unfavourable comparison. Thus the kind of style-shift seen in example (37) could have the politeness function of mitigating threat to face by suggesting that the function of story-telling is more important than that of, say, attributing blame.

In this section we have seen that *je* was used in our corpus less frequently with main verbs than it was with hedges, and that the majority of these uses were related to the description of past, present and future actions of the speaker relevant to the meeting. The main politeness function that *je* fulfilled was that of effecting a deictic shift to make a narrative more interesting to a hearer.

4.1.7 Concluding remarks

In the [JE] category, it was argued that the first person singular pronoun *moi*, by repeating information already encoded in the subject or object pronoun, contravened the Gricean maxim of Quantity and therefore acted as a hedge

on the force of the subject pronoun *je*. Where *moi* did not have an anaphoric or cataphoric function contrasting the speaker with another party, the particle could function as a strengthener or weakener. However, in contrast with Brown and Levinson's view that hedges are in themselves, strengtheners or weakeners, it was argued that the interpretation of the hedge *moi* depends on the perceived strength or weakness of the speaker, that is to say that it is pragmatically determined. It was found that [JE] occurred most frequently (58%) with verbs serving as hedges to the main verb of the proposition. These hedges could be divided into three groups: 'quality' hedges, 'attitude' hedges and 'performative' hedges. 'Quality' hedges were argued to function in the way that has already been described for *moi*. 'Attitude' hedges, due to their essentially unverifiable nature, could be used by speakers to conventionally pay attention to face and to disassociate a speaker from a FTA. 'Performative' hedges were seen to be a productive resource in this corpus, affording protection to face where the illocutionary force claimed through them by the speaker was less than that implied by the speech act itself. It was also argued that performatives were strengtheners and that their use could also provide examples of how speakers use language to create authority for themselves. Finally, it was seen that the majority of uses of [JE] with the main verb of a proposition related to past, present and future actions of

participants which were relevant to the meeting. [JE] could also be used to shift the deictic centre of a narrative from a third party to the speaker or, with a temporal deictic shift, it could be used as a narrative device directed at the positive face of the hearer.

4.2 The use of [NOUS]

It was seen in Chapter 3, that [NOUS], like [JE], semantically encodes speaker reference, the only difference being that it includes the speaker of the utterance and one or more other individuals who may or may not include the hearer and may or may not include the third person.

With the exception of outlining the possible usage of [NOUS] for 'I' in academic writings or for purposes of modesty in speech, there is little guidance given to the student regarding the usage of [NOUS] in English grammars of French (Byrne & Churchill, 1987, Judge & Healey, 1983, Ferrar, 1984) although some modern coursebooks (*Le Français en faculté* (1980:12) follow Martinet (1979) when he points to the fact that in everyday spoken language *on* very often replaces [NOUS] in the subject position:

Dans l'usage quotidien, *on* /ø/øn/, remplace très normalement *nous* en fonction sujet et, dans certains cas, le réfléchi est se: *on* y

va? /ɔ̃n i va/ = nous y allons? *On se déplace* /ɔ̃ s deplas/ = nous nous déplaçons.

In everyday usage, *on* /ɔ̃/ɔ̃n/, very frequently replaces *nous* in the subject position, and in certain instances, the reflexive form is *se*: *on y va?* /ɔ̃n i va/ = nous y allons? *On se déplace* /ɔ̃ s deplas/ = nous nous déplaçons. (Martinet, 1979:55)

They add that when [ON] replaces [NOUS] in this way [NOUS] acts as the complementary object and dative (non-reflexive) pronoun. For example:

(38) (D) *on va pas changer nous*

This usage occasionally offends the more prescriptive French ear. Martinet says (1979:55):

La présence, dans un même énoncé, de *on* = *nous*, par exemple, dans *Nous, on préfère le Midi* /nu ɔ̃ prefer l midi/ est sentie comme négligée par beaucoup d'usagers

Furthermore, where there is a cooccurring determiner this will agree with the intended referent, for example:

(39) (G) *on n'a pas pu complètement faire correspondre nos programmes*

Laberge and Sankoff (1980:271) go further than Martinet and maintain that in Canadian French [ON] has virtually ousted [NOUS] in subject position. In this section we shall first look at the use of [NOUS] in the subject function and, given its low frequency of occurrence in our

data, supplement this with data taken from the media. Then we shall examine the use of the first person plural pronoun in non-subject position.

4.2.1 [NOUS] in subject position

As might have been expected, there was a very low frequency of occurrence of [NOUS] in the subject position, the only occurrences being:

(40) (L) ce que *nous* disions

(41) (D) parce que *nous*... (interruption)

Indeed, only (40) is a clear example of a use of [NOUS] in subject function and in this instance it appears to be used to refer to a group which does not include an individual named Gilbert. In the extended extract below Luc suggests that a proposal made by Gilbert to organise some traditional games would be less feasible to implement than an alternative proposal made by a group of which he was part (*nous*) to organise some less traditional ones.

(42) (L) je ne suis pas sûr que l'ancien jeu que souhaite Gilbert c'est à dire de retrouver des jeux je sais pas...[c'est compliqué] je ne suis pas sûr qu'on puisse qu'on puisse les faire... donc faire à mon à mon avis ce que *nous* disions une sorte d'intervilles d'interquartiers quoi...

On the basis of presupposition, all that can be said about this use of [NOUS] is that it includes the speaker and excludes Gilbert and that the relationship is one of contrast: between a group excluding Gilbert and including the speaker and another group which may or may not include either of these individuals. Normally [ON] could fulfil this function but here there is a risk of confusion because [ON] is already being used by the speaker to refer to a group which potentially includes Gilbert. The referent of [NOUS] can be interpreted by those who know the identity of those who made this alternative proposal and indeed may refer to a previous decision taken in a *Lyon Matin* meeting.

Elsewhere, such relations of contrast are achieved through the emphatic or focussing device of *c'est...qui/que* which demotes [NOUS] from the subject or object pronoun to disjunctive pronoun. So while [NOUS] here is not grammatically in subject position we shall treat it as a pseudo-subject. For example:

(43) (D) *c'était nous qui faisons faire des photos*

(44) (G) *c'est nous qui avons au contraire décalé nos vacances*

In the following extract co-referentiality and therefore presupposition provide a clue to interpretation. Here, Guillot complains that there has been no forward-planning

of the holiday period and he contrasts his and one other colleague's public-spirited approach (*nous*) with that of the rest of the staff:

(45) (G) Joëlle et moi-même on n'a pas choisi spécialement de se mettre ensemble c'est parce que d'autres gens ont décidé de prendre déjà août et septembre *c'est nous qui avons* au contraire décalé nos vacances

In example (45) above, we assume that both [ON] and [NOUS] are co-referential and refer to both the speaker, Guillot, and to his colleague Joëlle. The choice to shift from the indeterminate pronoun to the first person plural pronoun may be accounted for by the absence of a disjunctive pronoun for on which therefore cannot be used with the focussing device. It may also be accounted for by its more determinate and therefore personal nature for Guillot is highlighting his experience and that of a close colleague in opposition to *d'autres gens*, a group of colleagues who have already chosen August and September for their holidays.

4.2.2 [NOUS] *de modestie*

Despite the fact that [NOUS] is the second most determinate personal pronoun, its range of reference can extend from the speaker to any size of group. It is this degree of indeterminacy which has allowed [NOUS] to become

a 'polite' alternative for [JE] in certain contexts. Grévisse (1986:1001) mentions the 'royal we' (*pluriel dit de majeste*) used by monarchs, bishops and persons of authority and the 'modest we' (*pluriel dit de modestie*) used by authors for self reference. In colloquial speech the [NOUS] form can also occasionally be used for second or third person reference and while some examples are provided no explanation is given for this usage (Grevisse, 1986:1001).

Given such a wide range of potential reference, the hearer will need to draw on pragmatic knowledge to interpret the referent of [NOUS]. The extracts we shall examine are taken from a French television literary chat show *Apostrophes* (7.9.86) chaired by Bernard Pivot. We shall first examine two extracts off-air where the listener goes on record to query an implied referent of [NOUS] and then we shall examine an extract from our own corpus.

We can see from the following two extracts instances where it is possible that the speaker has selected the pronouns *nous* and *on* to substitute for *je* in situations where there is potential threat to his face. In both extracts the journalist Jacques Chancel (JC) is challenged by the host Bernard Pivot (BP) about his use of the pronoun *nous*. In the first extract Bernard Pivot has committed the face-threatening act of accusing the journalist of having

written uncharitably of a colleague and published the work. In reply JC conversationally implies that these actions were the responsibility of a group, *nous*. When challenged about his use of *nous*, he substitutes the indeterminate pronoun *on*:

(46) (JC) ..puisque ce livre *nous* avons souhaité le publier il ne fallait pas tricher

(BP) qu'est-ce que vous qu'est-ce que c'est que ce *nous* que vous employez

(JC) non mais c'est vrai *on* en avait beaucoup parlé avec Yves Berger et Jean-Claude Fasquel et un certain nombre de

(BP) mais c'est *vous* qui le publiez c'est pas eux quand-même

(JC) mais *on* en disait qu'*on* pouvait peut-être

(BP) *je je*

Bernard Pivot is undoubtedly using his contextual knowledge about where the responsibility lies for this particular publication to interpret the referent of *nous*. On behalf of the viewers, who do not share this knowledge, he challenges the presupposition contained in JC's use of *nous* and, later on, *on* which conversationally implicates that this decision was not his alone. If BP manages to establish that JC is referring to himself alone then the listener may reasonably assume that he has chosen this form of pronominal reference strategically in an attempt to save face by suggesting that responsibility for maligning a fellow-journalist was not his alone. BP cannot

accuse JC of deliberately lying (for the use of *nous* and *on* do not entail a minimal group in terms of usage, they merely presuppose it through their grammatical form); what he can do is to reveal JC's departure from Gricean maxims and let the viewers draw their own conclusions about his motives. Are they due to modesty or to a desire to evade responsibility?

Furthermore, it is interesting that, when challenged on the first occasion, JC substitutes the more indeterminate pronoun *on* for *nous*. For *on*, which can also be used for self-reference, can also be used by the speaker to imply that the identity of the referent is not relevant. Thus the focus can be changed from the actor to the action. However, Pivot is not deterred by this strategy and persists in trying to establish the referent for the benefit of the viewers.

In extract (47) Pivot again clearly thinks that Chancel is exploiting the pronoun *nous* to bolster his own position. Chancel is challenging another journalist, Michel Parbot (MP), about his credentials for making television documentaries in the Far East. He asks how long MP stayed in Indochina and on hearing that he hasn't stayed long, contrasts this with the experience of himself and (conversationally implicated) others, *nous*, who had stayed there for seven or eight years. Thus he is not only

threatening the face of his addressee by challenging his right to speak on a certain subject, but he protects his own face from accusations of lack of modesty by implying that he was one of many (thereby adding to the force of the threat to MB). Bernard Pivot is quick to advert to this power game and instantly challenges JC about his use of *nous*:

(47) (JC) combien de temps es-tu resté en Indochine

(MP) oh... pas longtemps malheureusement

(JC) c'est tout le problème... *nous nous sommes restés sept et huit ans là-bas... nous avons fait un travail de presse sur le terrain*

(BP) *mais nous c'est vous c'est je*

(JC) non je mais avec... il y avait (+ list of names)

What is particularly important about the two instances analysed above, is that a listener, from a position of authority, has gone on record and challenged the use of a particular pronoun. In the data that we have examined this has occurred extremely rarely. Such challenges are evidence that, while in the vast majority of cases hearers may not perceive any ambiguity in the use of a given pronoun or, if they do, do not judge it worthy of comment or clarification, there are indeed cases where clarification is deemed necessary or strategically desirable.

It is interesting that, while hearers may long suspect that a speaker is exploiting the 'royal we' for whatever purposes, it is very rarely possible to be able to claim that this is the case. For example, the politician Margaret Thatcher when she was Prime Minister was long suspected of using the 'royal we', a linguistic prerogative which it was felt her office did not confer upon her. However, this could never be proved because of the indeterminacy of 'we' which could be used to refer to 'we the government' 'we the Cabinet', etc. It was only in March 1989, on the birth of her first grandchild, that this 'royal' use was clearly corroborated when she declared to the press 'We have become a grandmother'. Linguistically the singular noun complement to the supposedly plural pronoun is evidence enough; knowledge of participants and roles leaves no room for doubt. The importance of this incident in the press at a folk-linguistic level serves to highlight the social significance the choice of pronoun can have.

4.2.3 [NOUS] in non-subject position

The relatively high frequency of occurrence of [NOUS] in positions other than that of subject must, in large part, be attributed to the fact that here [NOUS] functions as a disjunctive and object pronoun for both

[NOUS] and [ON] in the subject position and that [ON] does not have an imperative form.

Another use of [NOUS] which is not referred to in the grammars we have consulted is the [NOUS] of corporate identity i.e. referring to a firm or institution of which interlocutors have common membership, in this case [NOUS] = *Lyon Matin*. In Brown and Levinson's terms this would be classed as a positive politeness strategy. In a sense it brings together substrategies 5 (Use in-group identity markers (1987:107)) and 12 (Include both S and H in the activity (1987:127)). An example of this corporate use of [NOUS] can be seen when one of the photographers is arguing in favour of continuity of contact with the public:

- (48) (P1) c'est tout là *notre* présence *nous* de d'un rédacteur comme Jean-Jacques ou d'un photographe comme moi bon ben c'est sûr on représente on représente le journal hein c'est plus sérieux bien sûr que d'avoir un correspondant de ce côté-là [] *notre* présence *notre* présence
- (D) n'oubliez pas que chaque fois comme tu dis on représente notre titre le fait de se déplacer quelque part pour les gens c'est Lyon Matin qui vient vers eux...

By using the corporate [NOUS] a speaker can put on record his or her allegiance to the newspaper, thus establishing that whatever proposals are being made, these are in the best interests of the newspaper. Also

by appealing to the corporate strength of an institution a speaker can add authority to his or her arguments.

In terms of politeness theory, the first person plural imperative can function similarly as a positive politeness device. While an imperative addressed to another individual is inherently face-threatening because it implies that the speaker is predicating some future act of H and is thus threatening to H's negative face, first person plural imperative enables the speaker to include him/herself in the exhortation. Thus the face-threatening content is weakened and the principle of solidarity (i.e. H's positive face) appealed to. Such considerations may have motivated the editor's use of this form when imposing his will on the discussion and eliminating issues that he did not feel merited debate:

(49) (D) *ne reposons pas un problème qui est réglé réglons
réglons*

(50) (D) *limitons-nous à notre département*

In both these examples contextual factors tell us that these are commands addressed to other people. In (49) Dousson is replying to Jean-Pierre who has raised a problem that Dousson believes has already been solved. Thus if Dousson were to adhere to the quality maxim he

would use the face-threatening second person imperative 'ne reposez pas'. By using the first person imperative he is able to appeal to Jean-Pierre's cooperation.

Utterance (50) occurs when Dousson is giving instructions about summer coverage and the first person imperative is no doubt addressed to all those present responsible in one way or another for producing these articles. Thus, in terms of responsibility, Dousson is not included in the referent. Thus we can also assume that he has chosen the first person imperative as a form of positive politeness strategy. The underlying [NOUS] is either that of the newspaper as an institution which enables him to call upon the authority of the paper or it is a group made up minimally of himself and the hearer: he has included himself in the activity to call upon cooperative assumptions on the part of the hearers.

Similarly, the use of the phrase *soyons francs* to preface a dispreferred response corresponds closely to the English adverbial hedge 'frankly' (see Brown and Levinson 1987:165) except that it includes both speaker and hearer in the activity and as such appeals to the maxim of Quality.

Elsewhere the use of the first person imperative has become lexicalised (*disons*, *mettons*) and can function

as a quality hedge on the utterance by raising it to a hypothetical status.

- (51) (L) le reproche qu'on peut faire mettons si aux faits divers on envoyaient....
- (51) (P3) bon *disons* que pour l'instant bon ben la réunion comme vous le savez s'est bien passée...

This device could be useful as a positive politeness strategy for presupposing common ground. At the same time, it serves the negative politeness purpose of disassociating the speaker from the proposition.

4.2.4 Concluding remarks

In this section we have seen how the subject pronoun [NOUS] can be used to contrast a group including the speaker with other groups which may or may not also include the speaker (4.2.1). We saw how [NOUS] could be used to refer to the speaker alone (4.2.2) and how, in such circumstances, this use of [NOUS] presupposed a minimal group. Therefore, a speaker could use [NOUS] in this way to spread responsibility for an action or to appeal to wider authority for this action. The first person plural can also be used to refer to a corporate identity. This has the positive politeness effect of presupposing cooperation and communality of views between members of an institution. Finally (4.2.3), the first person imperative was seen to have two main

functions in this data: that of a 'quality' hedge, dissociating the speaker from a proposition; and that of a positive politeness device, reducing the threat to the face of the hearer by including the speaker in the exhortation.

4.3 The use of [TU]

4.3.1 Introduction

The pronoun [TU] and its covariant [VOUS] have received more attention than any other personal pronoun in both grammars of French usage and also in sociolinguistic research (Brown & Gilman, 1960, Lambert & Tucker, 1976, etc.). The [TU] (T) form is often called the 'familiar' form whereas the [VOUS] (V) form is known as the 'polite' form. Similar T/V distinctions have been charted in a variety of languages. The distinction in French has been studied in relation to geographical factors: Lambert and Tucker (1976) have contrasted usage in parts of France and in parts of Canada and within Canada between urban Montreal, rural Quebec and the sparsely populated islands of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon; diachronic factors: Judge and Healey (1985:69) mention attempts at prescribing usage after the French Revolution; and cross-culturally with Brown and Gilman (1960) contrasting usage in France and

Germany, etc. Brown & Levinson (1986:23) argue that since pluralization of personal pronouns to refer to singular referents is widespread throughout the world, singular [VOUS] is not, from a Saussurean perspective, an arbitrary form but rather a motivated one: one motivated by the desire to give deference. They argue, in short, that honorifics are frozen conversational implicatures.

Even the more traditional of grammars of French for anglophone learners give some guidance relating to the sociolinguistic factors which influence usage. Ferrar, who does not give any guidance to usage for any other pronoun, states (1955:199):

Tu and te are normally used when speaking to a single person who is a close relative or an intimate friend. They are also used to any child or an animal. Otherwise 2nd Plural vous is normally used to address single persons.

Grevisse (1986:1002), in his more recent grammar, suggests that the use of T presupposes a degree of familiarity whereas V denotes distance. However he does not enter into any discussion of variation, stating :

Mais il y a d'importantes variations selon les temps, les lieux, les classes sociales, les familles, les individus.

However, there is substantial variation according to time, place, social class, families, individuals.

Judge and Healey (1985:68-9), who give the most complete guidance of all the grammars consulted, say that for the English learner 'The *tu/vous* pair is the most fertile source of problems' and suggest that except in certain clear-cut circumstances the learner should use *vous* as 'it is wiser to leave the initiative in *tutoiement* to the native speaker'. This echoes the advice given by Vigner (1978) in his book *Savoir-vivre en France* which aims at providing the foreigner with some basic rules of French etiquette.

According to Brown and Gilman (1960:252) the choice of the T/V pronoun is conditioned by the factors of power and solidarity (distance). The more important of these according to Coste et al. (1981:25) is the distance which the interlocutors would like to maintain:

On notera qu'en français l'usage du "vous" ou du "tu" ne manifeste pas obligatoirement des différences de statuts entre interlocuteurs ni toujours le caractère formel ou intime des rapports. Ce choix repose sur la distance que veulent maintenir entre eux les personnes engagées dans un échange verbal.

It can be seen that in French the use of "vous" or "tu" does not necessarily display any difference in status between interlocutors nor, in all cases, how formal or close their relationship is. The choice of pronoun is primarily motivated by the distance which the speakers in a speech event wish to maintain between each other.

It is true that a speaker may use a variety of avoidance techniques to avoid putting on record his/her perceived relationship with an addressee. However once the choice of

pronoun is made the only alteration it may normally undergo within a speech event is unidirectional i.e. from the 'polite' [VOUS] to the more 'familiar' [TU] (unless speakers have forgotten the relationship they had established or want to go on record as having renegotiated its basis).

So, while the choice of T/V is sensitive to perceptions of power and perhaps to a greater extent, distance, pronominal choice is not normally influenced by the third factor used in Brown and Levinson's model of politeness theory, that is, the weight of a given face-threatening activity.

Thus the use of pronoun is generally stable (although pronominal selection may still be avoided in conversation to avoid drawing attention to the status of the relationship). A speaker and a hearer who address each other as T generally would not revert to V during, say, a difficult negotiation and then readopt the T of solidarity to show afterwards that they held no hard feelings towards each other. Individuals who use T to each other in informal circumstances may prefer to adopt V at a formal occasion such as a meeting in order not to appear to appeal to a privileged relationship. However, it is the situation, and the distance which it implies, and not weightiness of a face-threatening act which prompt such a

choice. The findings of Brown and Gilman (1960) support this view.

Jespersen (1905) believed that English 'thou' and 'ye' (or 'you') were more often shifted to express mood and tone than were the pronouns of the continental languages and our comparisons strongly support this opinion.

4.3.2 The use of [TU] in the corpus

Let us now examine the use of [TU] in our corpus. The most striking feature is that in a meeting between individuals, most of whom would address each other in normal social contact with the pronoun [TU], there should be such a low frequency of occurrence of this pronoun: 30 occurrences in all. This may be due to the nature of the communicative event, a chaired meeting presupposing a degree of distance. However, what is probably more significant is the low frequency of occurrence of pronouns semantically encoding hearer reference. We shall initially examine the use of [TU] solely for specific reference and then go on to discuss those uses of [TU] which allow a generic interpretation.

(1) The use of [TU] for specific reference

During the meeting, out of a total of 20 occurrences of [TU], the subject pronoun [TU] was used by Dousson 15 times when directly addressing five other (male) participants in the meeting (Jean-Pierre, Luc, Yves, the first photographer and one unspecified individual). In the following example, co-referential naming of the addressee provided the referent of [TU]:

(53) (D) Jean-Pierre... *tu voudras bien parler à haute et intelligible voix*

In other examples, the identification of the referent was through the paralinguistic features of eye contact and gesture and through knowledge about participants and roles.

There is only one other instance of direct address by [TU] (between Bernard, the deputy editor, and the first photographer). Dousson's use of [TU] with a number of male journalists contrasts with his one use of [VOUS] with a singular referent in the case of Christine (see 4.4) (6).

It may be significant that at no point is the editor addressed by anyone with the pronoun [TU]. For were a subordinate, who might typically use [TU] with the editor in a more informal situation, to use this pronoun in the formal situation of a meeting, it could be seen either as an indirect appeal to a privileged status within the

context of the meeting (through the solidarity semantic) or as a challenge to the authority of the editor (through the power semantic). As such it could threaten both the face of the speaker and the hearer. The power of the editor to exert his influence over his staff would be questioned by this appeal to solidarity. Thus the situation of utterance and the power it implies can be seen as influencing the sense of distance in the meeting. Thus, while individual FTAs do not normally affect the use of T or V, a face-threatening situation (in this case a formal meeting) may affect pronominal use, and in particular lead to avoidance strategies. There is a need, therefore, for studies to investigate the use, not only of T and V, but also of strategies designed to avoid these, in situations where there is a threat to face.

While most of the participants in the meeting might not be in a position to influence the distribution of power, those who are in a position of power are able to appeal to solidarity in the interests of suasion and of mitigating any threat to face occasioned by their exercise of this power. In the first extract, Bernard prefaces the imposition of his views by agreeing with his addressee on a specific point using the T form, before reiterating his general (face-threatening) view to a wider audience addressed by the V form:

- (54) (B) *ce que tu dis est vrai mais n'oubliez pas quand même qu'il faut que les correspondants restent correspondants et les journalistes journalistes...*

Similarly, Dousson appeals to shared knowledge and solidarity when he gives reasons for imposing his decision:

- (55) (D) *tu sais bien que si c'est pour l'intérieur on va passer deux photos maxi*
(56) (D) *je crois que c'est très grave même tu sais bien que même les problèmes internes qui se posent actuellement... tu sais que la rédaction du Progrès elle est sous pression...*

In these utterances Bernard and Dousson are committing the FTA of countering a complaint put forward by one of the photographers. The use of the solidary [TU], the prefacing of disagreement by agreement and the device of suggesting that the photographer already agrees with the speaker's point of view are all positive politeness devices which work towards the reduction of threat to face.

(11) The use of [TU] for generic reference

In French, as in English, [TU] and [VOUS] can both be used in contexts of generality meaning 'people in general'. However, as we shall see in Chapter 5, they compete with [ON] which can also fulfill this function and is much more widely used pronoun than its direct British English

equivalent 'one', for, as well as fulfilling the generic function, it is also used by certain social groups for deictic purposes. Laberge and Sankoff (1980) have investigated this co-alternation with [ON] in Montreal French from a variationist perspective and argue that *on* is currently being replaced by [TU] and [VOUS] in contexts of generality. They make the point that the choice of [TU] or [VOUS] in contexts of generality is not necessarily linked to the address form used by a speaker to a hearer for specific reference. They also relate linguistic preference to social status: speakers 'for whom "speaking well" pays off' (1980:286) are more likely to use the more standard form [ON]. The present study, unlike that of Laberge and Sankoff, does not aim to look at language variation but rather to see what can be said about language choices made by speakers. Nonetheless, we shall refer to the work by Laberge and Sankoff in this section and more extensively in Chapter Five, where we shall examine in greater depth, some syntactic, lexical and discoursal constraints on genericity (5.1).

In the corpus there were 6 occurrences where a generic interpretation was possible.

For example, in the following extract relating to contacts with show business, Dousson is building on a preceding

turn and recalling the old-style artistes who still had time to spend with journalists:

(57) (P1) on a connu pourtant des anciens chanteurs enfin des (c'est fini ça) effectivement []

(D) *t'as Charles Dumont qu'on connaît tous Charles Dumont lui se prête à tout ce qu'on veut il vient boire un verre de champ avec nous tu te rappelles dans le bureau bon des gars comme ça mais comme les autres c'est fini tu les as plus*

It would be difficult to assign specific reference (i.e. reference to P1) to these two uses of [TU]. The structure '*t'as X*' is a conventional means of introducing an example (and indeed the suggestion that P1 somehow possesses Charles Dumont is highly implausible in this context). Laberge and Sankoff (1980:277) find that this structure is a syntactic indicator of generality. Furthermore, they find that a tense change from a past to a present also functions to indicate generality. Dousson, in this extract, is exemplifying the photographer's statement by naming a particular artiste, making it relevant to all who are present (*qu'on connaît tous*) by implying that everyone knows this particular singer, giving an example of the singer's cooperative behaviour by referring to an incident where he, Dousson, the photographer (whose presence is implied by the query as to whether he remembers it *tu te rappelles*) and the artiste were present, and finally drawing the conclusion that those days are over (*c'est fini tu les as plus*). Given the impersonal *c'est fini* and

the relevance of the example to all present, the predominant value of [TU] here is also generic. Laberge and Sankoff would define this use of [TU] as the formulation of a truism or a moral and would predict that such a generalization would, in the case of Montreal French, be more likely to attract the use of *on*. However, such approaches focus more on alternate ways of transmitting propositional content rather than on interpersonal factors (which include the negotiation and maintenance of human relationships as well as interactional goals such as, say, persuasion). In this study we are more concerned with the potential interactional effects of a given use of a pronoun.

What then is the difference, in interpersonal terms, between Dousson's utterance and its propositional 'equivalent' *on a Charles Dumont*. The main difference, comes from the values of [TU] and [ON] other than their shared value of genericity. [TU], in alternation with [VOUS], appeals to solidarity and therefore its use, in this example, could be an example of the use of in-group markers, a positive politeness strategy identified by Brown and Levinson (1987:107). In addition, within the speaker/hearer paradigm, it enables the speaker to effect a shift of point of view, assuming that his own personal experience is that of his hearer. The use of [ON] would also include both speaker and hearer, but here the sense

of personal involvement is much reduced insofar as the use of [ON] without any evidence to the contrary, may include the speaker and hearer, like any other, in the referent. The use of [TU] enables the speaker to go from the specific ('you' in particular) to the generic ('anyone' just like you) on the basis of contextual information. [ON], it appears to us, allows the speaker to start at the generic ('anyone') and, depending on the context, go towards the specific (e.g. 'we here').

In addition to two occurrences of the conventionalised formula *si tu veux*, there are two further occurrences in the corpus where [TU] appears to be used in a generic sense:

(58) (P1) oui mais à la prise de vue à ce moment-là tu as deux gars
qui travaillent...

(59) (Y) ça te fait découvrir aussi tout ce que c'est que l'Education
Nationale...

Extract (58) is spoken by one of the photographers who is raising an objection to a policy decision by Dousson. He is backed up by a colleague. Let us examine the utterance in its wider co-text:

(60) (P1) oui mais à la prise de vue à ce moment-là tu as deux gars
qui travaillent il y en a un qui travaille

(P2) il y a deux gars qui travaillent avec de la chance parce que parfois les weekends il y en a 3 ou 4

What is interesting here is that the second speaker builds on the point made by the first speaker and extends it. In doing so he paraphrases the first speaker, impersonalising (*il y a*) what had previously been a personal reference (*tu*). This is evidence that he has interpreted the statement *tu as deux gars* as a generic reference. On purely contextual grounds (knowledge that this speaker is speaking from his own experience), another possible referent would be the speaker. Thirdly, if we take the specific value of *tu*, the referent could be Dousson himself. As we argued previously (see Chapter 2), it is possible for more than one value to be present in a single pronoun. Thus the choice of a personal speaker/hearer pronoun by the speaker may enable him to extrapolate from his own experience and at the same time effect a shift of point of view with the aim of persuading Dousson to place himself in the photographer's position and thereby to share his point of view. Given the presence of a generic value of [TU], he cannot be accused of appealing to solidarity with Dousson (through use of specific reference); nonetheless, this (cancellable) appeal is present. At the same time, by personalising the example, he can foreground the effects of the current state of affairs on individuals working in the newspaper.

In extract (61), while Yves is addressing the whole meeting (and responding to laughter of jocular derision), it is also possible that he is using the *T* pronoun to refer to himself at the same time as to appeal to each individual in the group:

(61) (Y) ...enfin c'est marrant j'ai retrouvé là un monde que j'avais perdu il y les rapports des inspecteurs généraux etcetéra c'est drôlement intéressant en réalité parce que ça te fait découvrir aussi tout ce que c'est l'éducation nationale et tout ça ça mérite d'écrire un papier vraiment très très curieux

Here, pragmatic and linguistic factors suggest that there are only two possible referents for *te*: 'anybody in a similar situation' (generic reference); the speaker (specific reference). Both contextual knowledge of participant roles (we know that Yves has just experienced what he is talking about) and the syntactic proximity of *te* to the self-reference of the pronoun *je* (*j'ai retrouvé là un monde que j'avais perdu*) suggest that this extract is propositionally equivalent to *ça m'a fait découvrir....* However, the temporal deictic shift from the past to the present suggests that Yves is not only talking about one particular incident but that he is raising this to the status of a general rule.

From the point of view of politeness, if Yves wishes to claim weight for this observation, then it may be in his interest to avoid the personal pronoun [JE] (depending on

his perception of his own standing in the group). The choice of a second rather than a first person pronoun (as used earlier in his turn) enables Yves to claim weight for his assertion and effect a shift of point of view towards his hearer(s). He can thus imply that anyone, in the situation he had been in, would have shared the same experience. In this way, Yves can both avoid charges of lack of modesty and claim weight and relevance for his observation by implying that his experience is that of anyone. This is the interpretation given by Laberge and Sankoff (1980:281).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987:119) there is a further explanation for the choice of a second person pronoun: to effect a 'personal centre switch: S to H'. Here S speaks as if H were S, a positive politeness mechanism which seeks to merge the points of view of S and H.

However, while the pragmatic interpretation of self-reference may be available to the hearer, it is overlaid with the generic value of [TU]. The specific value is excluded as the hearers are demonstrably not in the school referred to and therefore the utterance cannot be interpreted as a statement of fact. The utterance is implicitly implicative (see 5.1.3) and could be glossed as '(if you go back to that world) you will find out what the

National Education System is all about'. As the pronoun is in the object position there are only three possibilities available for generic reference, the pronouns *te* and *vous* (there is no object pronoun for [ON]) or omission of the pronoun altogether (*Ça fait découvrir*).

Why choose the singular [TU] rather than plural/polite [VOUS], given that the speaker is addressing the meeting at large? If the speaker is using the positive politeness mechanism discussed above to merge the points of view of both S and H, then the singular would be more appropriate insofar as it allows Yves to address each hearer individually. This shift from a speaker-oriented to a hearer-oriented pronoun could be argued to be a suasive device as it reduces the distance between speaker and hearer and encourages the hearer to share the speaker's point of view. Brown and Levinson 1987:107-112 suggest that the use of the T pronoun in situations where it is *not normally used is a positive politeness device of using in-group solidarity markers*.

In all the examples examined above speakers could have chosen an impersonal form to convey genericity.

Alternatively, as they are, in principle, addressing the whole meeting, they could also have also used [VOUS].

However, the choice of [TU] enables them to appeal to the positive politeness strategy of solidarity.

Laberge and Sankoff (1980:281) call this type of generalization 'situational insertion' and argue that, by using [TU], the speaker 'assimilates himself to a much wider class of people, downgrading his experience to incidental status in the discourse, phrasing it as something that could or would be anybody's'. While we would agree with the first proposition, we would argue that the effect of such a strategy is not in itself to downgrade the speaker's experience. Insofar as both the specific and the generic reference are both present in the utterance, how the hearer grades the importance of the incident recounted will depend on his or her evaluation of the speaker and of the incident. What Laberge and Sankoff do not examine is the third value of [TU] present in the discourse: that which is addressed at the addressee(s) and which appeals to solidarity.

4.3.3 Concluding remarks

In this section we noted (4.3.1) that while the choice of T/V encodes conventional politeness in terms of the perceived power and distance between interlocutors, the weight of the FTA does not affect pronominal choice although it may affect the decision of whether to use second person reference or not. We also noted the infrequency of use of [TU], and indeed of second person reference in general and the fact that, in this recording,

it is used as specific reference only from the more powerful towards the less powerful. Here, we argued that one function of its use could be that of an appeal to solidarity. We also saw (4.3.2 (i)) that [TU], unlike [JE], when used for specific reference, relies on extralinguistic information for interpretation of addressee. Whereas [JE] invariably refers to the speaker, [TU], when used in a group of people, is generally accompanied by eye-contact, naming, or other contextual clues in order to disambiguate the intended addressee. Finally, we looked at the use of [TU] for generic reference (4.3.2. (ii)) and argued that it might be preferred to other syntactically equivalent forms if the speaker wishes to use positive politeness in the interests of suasion or similar threats to face. Indeed, we argued that the motivation for using one form for the generic rather than another was related to the alternative values present for a given pronoun.

4.4 The use of [VOUS]

4.4.1 Introduction

As we have seen in Chapter 3, the range of indeterminacy allowed by the pronoun [VOUS] is greater than for all the other speaker hearer personal pronouns we have examined so far. It can be used for both specific and generic

reference and it can also be used for both a singular and plural referent. When it is used in the singular it is the 'polite' form and alternates with the 'familiar' [VOUS].

In section 4.3. we saw that Brown and Levinson had argued that the use of a plural pronoun for singular reference was an example of a frozen conversational implicature. In speculating (1987:198-200) on the origins of the widespread pluralization of 'polite' second person singular pronouns they say that these can serve two purposes: in kinship societies where the individual's social status is linked to that of a group it can be a way of paying deference to that group (being the addressee-oriented equivalent of the speaker-oriented corporate 'we'); it can also be an indirectness device providing an 'out' for speaker and hearer as described below (1987:198-199):

On the one hand 'you' plural provides a conventional 'out' for the hearer (as R. Lakoff (1973a) has observed). That is since it does not *literally* single out the addressee, it is as if the speaker were giving H the option to interpret it as applying to him rather than to say his companions. The fact that by conventionalisation it no longer really does give H that out does not render it useless. Rather it conveys the *desire* of the speaker to render H that tribute, while fulfilling the practical needs of clarity and on-record talk.

However, in situations where there is more than one interlocutor, the pronoun [VOUS] can be genuinely as well as conventionally ambiguous, especially where most

participants use the 'polite' [VOUS] pronoun for specific reference.

As in the case of [TU] there is a low number of occurrences of [VOUS] (42) and here again a majority of these are made by Dousson (57%). As in the previous section we shall first examine the use of [VOUS] for specific reference and then look at uses which admit a generic interpretation.

4.4.2 Specific reference

In this section our first concern will be to classify occurrences of [VOUS] in terms of number. We shall first examine to what extent it is possible for the overhearer to ascertain whether [VOUS] is being used for a singular or plural referent.

(1) Plural [VOUS]

There are eight occurrences where pragmatic factors render the use of [VOUS] unambiguously plural. Only one of these is identified as such by the co-referential device of naming:

- (62) (D) Luc et Jocelyne ce soir avec Christian Renaud et Zoras vous leur dites qu'il y a un photographe de la maison point final

In five of the other occurrences the speaker uses [TU] and [VOUS] within the same turn as in the following examples:

- (63) (D) je crois qu'il faut faire ce que vous faites
habituellement quand vous rentrez vous nous dites les
trois quarts du temps c'est pour une DP magazine ou
c'est pour l'intérieur tu sais bien que si c'est pour
l'intérieur on va passer deux photos maxi...
- (64) (B) ce que tu dis est vrai mais n'oubliez pas quand même
qu'il faut que les correspondants restent correspondants
et les journalistes journalistes...

Given that Dousson does not visibly select a different speaker during these turns, we can infer that when he uses [VOUS] he is addressing a wider group and when he switches to [TU] he is singling one of them out.

Finally, Guillot uses [VOUS] twice non-deictically when he is relating a past incident:

- (65) (G) je leur dis non vos disques vous les gardez

Here the co-referential plural indirect object pronoun *leur* presupposes a plural referent for *vos* and *vous*.

(ii) Singular [VOUS]

There were two occurrences of [VOUS] used deictically as an unambiguous singular second person pronoun. The

editor directly addresses one of the women present by name and tells her to start taking notes as she will be responsible for a particular task:

(66) (D) là Christine il faudrait que *vous* commenciez à noter
parce que je pense que ça va *vous* concerner

Here Dousson is committing the face-threatening act of directly addressing an individual and telling her what to do when she has requested no such advice. It is interesting to look at the way that the editor has attenuated what is, in effect, a direct command, *commencez à noter* by using in the conditional tense an impersonal construction which takes the subjunctive mood. He further justifies his order and hedges this justification with a 'quality' hedge.

(iii) Singular/plural [VOUS]

Dousson, at a later point in the same turn, goes on to say:

(67) (D) donc ça c'est un des premiers thèmes dont je *vous* parle
comme *vous* partez en vacances au mois d'août mais ça ne
veut pas dire qu'il n'y a que *vous*...

(C) je ne suis pas toute seule

Here, with the exception of the third occurrence, it is no longer linguistic factors, or more precisely, co-reference which identify the referent. The first use of [VOUS] in extract (67) can potentially refer to those present in the meeting and the second occurrence to all those who will be away in August. It is the paralinguistic features of gaze and gesture (Dousson looks directly at Christine and signals at her with the side of his hand) which provide initial clues that the referent is indeed her. Then Dousson goes on record by saying *il n'y a que vous*, verbally cancelling the implication that in the previous two occurrences he has been addressing her and her alone and implying that he is now addressing only her. This implication is backed up by the fact that it is Christine who answers him. She is concerned that the fact that he is addressing only her might imply that she alone is responsible for covering a particular topic.

Even in cases such as this where both participants are aware of the potential ambiguity of the pronoun and are trying to clarify its intended referent(s), it is still not clear whether Dousson's use of *vous* had been addressed solely at Christine. Indeed, participant knowledge (in this instance of Christine and Dousson's habitual choice of either T or V in meetings) could, to some extent, assist the attribution of a referent. If

the pronoun used were habitually T then the use of V must be plural and as such would contradict the contextual evidence outlined above; if, as we assume, the pronoun habitually used is V then the potential for ambiguity is greater. That the ambiguity is there can be seen in the fact that Dousson both creates the implication that he is speaking to a single referent and then effectively cancels this. One explanation could be that he has chosen Christine as an example of what he wants done. All those who know that they are also involved in this task can choose to be included in the referent of *vous* (and indeed are encouraged to do so by Dousson's statement *il n'y a que vous* which, while being a reassurance to Christine can also act as an indirect directive to others present). In this way [VOUS] can provide an out for speaker and hearer.

The role of direct evidence whether on the part of the speaker (such as eye contact, gesture or) on the part of the hearer (in this case an acknowledgement by Christine that she has been addressed), is extremely significant in assigning a referent to a given pronoun. It is unlikely (although not impossible) that a speaker would engage in eye contact with individuals other than the direct addressee(s). There are a number of other cases in the corpus where eye contact would suggest a singular referent. In the following extract the editor

is rejecting an unwelcome suggestion from one of the photographers and fixes him with his eye:

(68) (D) non mais là alors là OK c'est une idée qu'il faut qui
doit rester ici je vous en supplie

Despite the presence of disambiguating paralinguistic features, the plural form does give the recipient a conventional 'out' as described above by allowing the journalist to interpret this as a directive addressed to the meeting as a whole. This is supported by the fact that Dousson has already used the T form to address Jean-Pierre previously.

There were 6 occurrences in the data where the second person imperative was used. Brown and Levinson argue (1987:98-101) that an imperative addressed to another individual is inherently face-threatening and that its use is an example of bald-on-record strategy where the interests of efficiency outweigh those of politeness. They point out (1987:100-1) that no face redress is necessary in cases of great urgency and desperation (or metaphorical urgency), where doing the FTA is primarily in H's interest, where there is channel noise, where the focus of interaction is task-oriented, where the speaker is very powerful or where she or he wants to be rude. In the the data studied for [VOUS] above, out of

the six occurrences of the imperative. two were in indirect speech and the remaining four were spoken by individuals who were more powerful (the editor and sub-editor) than any others at the meeting. Furthermore, in each instance they enjoined those present to do something which they, the speakers, believed to be in the interest of their addressees (*N'oubliez pas, pensez-y, rappelez-vous*).

It is interesting that, while it is possible to determine in some cases what relationship obtains (T or V) between the editor and a number of the journalists, it is not possible to determine which form of address they use with him. It can only be assumed that they use a reciprocal form of address. As we saw in 4.3, the absence of [TU] addressed to Dousson may be due to a desire on the part of the journalists not to put on record their relationship with him. If they were to use [TU] they could give the impression of overfamiliarity or of appealing to solidarity in a situation where this might be seen to be out of place. Thus the use of [VOUS] addressed to a group allows hearers to decide whether this reference applies to them and enables speakers to avoid difficult pronominal choices. It would seem to us that it is not the choice of whether to conduct a social relationship through the medium of [TU] or [VOUS] that is important in terms of face-

saving strategies but rather the decision whether or not (and to what extent) to put on record one's relationship with another individual.

4.4.3 Generic reference

As we have already seen (4.3.2), [TU], [VOUS] and [ON] can all serve as generic or indefinite pronouns. This value can be attached to seven occurrences of [VOUS] in our corpus. In the following extract, a woman journalist (W) has been complaining about difficulties in placing articles about the theatre:

(69) (W) ça veut dire que je regarde les maquettes

(D) ça veut dire aussi que vous les lisez parce que quand on fait les pré-maquettes c'est là qu'on prend qu'on décide un petit peu ce que le journal va prendre ou va pas prendre ça si vous donnez vos papiers en vrac faut pas dire euh

Dousson is committing the face-threatening acts of firstly suggesting that it is not enough for the journalist merely to look at the paste-ups, she also needs to read them carefully and secondly implying that she sends in her articles without prior classification. In Dousson's utterance, both occurrences of [VOUS] are accompanied by gaze which singles out the journalist as the addressee. This referent is further presupposed by the fact that Dousson's utterance initially parallels

that of the journalist (*ça veut dire que je, ça veut dire aussi que vous*) so that *vous* now occupies the slot occupied by *je* in the journalist's utterance.

Furthermore, insofar as the complaint is based on the woman's experience, it is probable that the answer will be directed at her. So far, both linguistically and pragmatically, everything points to a single referent. However, this is undercut firstly by the conventional 'out' afforded by [VOUS] and secondly because the structure of Dousson's utterances (the use of two implicative constructions and the use of the present tense) lends them also to a generic interpretation. Thus there are three values current in Dousson's use of *vous*, you = the journalist, you = everyone present at the meeting who might find themselves in that situation and you = anyone who might find her or himself in that situation. Thus, the greater the potential range of reference of a pronoun in a given context, the greater its potential for face-saving (see 2.3.1).

There is a similar exchange between Guillot and Dousson later where Guillot is asking forcefully for extra staffing and presents Dousson with an ultimatum:

- (70) (G) parce qu'il y a deux solutions... ou les gens euh il y a des gens en vacances bon on parle pas de ceux-là et restent mettons trois personnes... ou les trois personnes *vous* leur payez 9/30 c'est anti-syndical et anti-directionnel... ou alors *vous* leur faites prendre des repos et on tourne pas c'est simple

Here, the hypothetical nature of the argument, signalled by the implicative *mettons*, points even more directly at a generic interpretation. However, again, knowledge of participant roles, i.e. that it is Dousson's job to arrange the employment conditions of his staff, leads to a specific interpretation. The specific referent of *vous* would be Dousson. The argument between Guillot and Dousson is face-threatening for both parties; Guillot is implying that if no further staff are taken on Dousson will either have to break union and management rules or not be able to produce copy. The fact that here too there are three concurrent values: 'you' = Dousson, 'you' = all or some of those present and 'you' = anyone in such a situation allows, it seems to us, face to be saved.

4.4.4 Concluding remarks

The frequency of occurrence of [VOUS] like [TU] was low and also, as in the case of [TU], used substantially more by the editor than any other speaker. In this section (4.4.2) we examined the difficulties inherent in assigning number to a given use of [VOUS], and in assigning a potential referent or referents. We then (4.4.2 (iii)) looked at how this degree of indeterminacy could be exploited for purposes of politeness by providing an 'out' for the speaker and hearer,

especially in a communicative situation with more than one hearer present. Hearers can choose whether a given utterance of [VOUS] is directed at them personally, or whether it is directed at a wider group which may or may not include them. We also examined how [VOUS] can be used for generic reference (4.4.3) and how this further degree of indeterminacy, where the singular and plural, specific and generic values are all simultaneously present in discourse, can provide protection for the face of the speaker and the hearer.

4.5 Conclusion

A preliminary quantitative study (4.0) of the occurrence of subject personal pronouns showed a high frequency of occurrence of the most determinate pronoun *je* (44.4%) and the least determinate pronoun *on* (44.9%). A further study of all the realizations of those pronouns which semantically encode speaker or hearer reference showed that pronouns encoding speaker reference (79.1%) were considerably more frequent than those encoding hearer reference (20.9%).

In the [JE] category (4.1), it was significant that a high proportion of these pronouns (58%) occurred with verbs which qualified, or 'hedged' the propositional content of

the utterance, allowing the speaker to place on record his or her degree of commitment to the force of the utterance. It was argued (4.1.2) that the 'redundant pronoun' *moi* could function similarly as a hedge on the subject pronoun *je*. Brown and Levinson's division of hedges into strengthening and weakening particles on the basis of their linguistic properties was questioned and it was suggested that, in the case of *moi*, whether the particle was interpreted as a strengthener or a weakener depended entirely on pragmatic factors, that is, the hearer's perception of the authority of the speaker.

The verbs used to hedge propositions were classified into three categories: 'quality' hedges (4.1.3), 'attitude' hedges (4.1.4) and 'performative' hedges (4.1.5). In the case of 'quality' hedges it was argued that these functioned in much the same way as the particle *moi* described above, and that here again the interpretation of these hedges depended less on linguistic form than on the hearer's perception of the 'quality' of the speaker.

'Attitude' hedges were examined and shown to provide protection for the face of the speaker and hearer insofar as the feelings and states of mind they describe are known only to the speaker and are therefore not open to challenge. Thus a speaker can use these devices to

disassociate him or herself from a FTA and at the same time pay attention to the face of the hearer.

Counter to expectation, there was an important category of 'performative' hedges which allowed speakers metalinguistically to put on record the ostensible illocutionary force of a speech act. These served two principal politeness functions: a speaker could reduce threat to face where the threat implied by the performative was less than that implied by the speech act itself; also, insofar as the performative puts on record the speaker's commitment to a given speech act (implying that the felicity conditions for this act have already been met) it could function as a strengthener: a speaker can thus use performatives to assert his or her authority within a speech event.

Finally, while most uses of [JE] with main verbs (4.1.6) related to actions of participants relevant to the goals of the meeting, there was one use which could exercise a politeness function. [JE] could be used to effect a deictic shift of person (normally accompanied by a temporal shift from past to present) with the speaker assuming the role of other persons for the purposes of narration. Similarly, a temporal shift could enable the speaker to narrate a past incident in which he or she was a principal agent. This could have the effect of making

the narrative more interesting and relevant for the hearer and also, in the narration of a face-threatening incident, could protect the face of both speaker and hearer by suggesting that the function of story-telling (a cooperative activity) is more important than that of, for example, attributing blame.

In the [NOUS] category (4.2) there was an extremely low frequency of occurrence of this pronoun in subject position and therefore we supplemented our data from material taken off-air. We saw how this pronoun could be used by a speaker for self-reference motivated either by a need to share responsibility for an action or to draw on the authority of an implied group (4.2.2). We saw how a hearer, perceiving the mismatch between the reference implied by the linguistic form ([NOUS]) and that implied by context (the speaker), was able to contest this use of [NOUS] on the basis of pragmatic knowledge (4.2.2). We also noted that the use of a 'corporate' [NOUS] can enable a speaker to share responsibility or claim authority for a given proposition. Finally (4.2.3), we saw how some first person plural imperatives have become lexicalised and can act as a hedge on the quality of an utterance.

We noted the low frequency of occurrence of [TU] (4.3) and indeed of the hearer pronouns in general. In our data [TU]

was mainly used, for specific reference (4.3.2.(ii)), by the more powerful speakers to the less powerful ones. One function of its use could be an appeal for solidarity. In generic reference (4.3.2 (ii)) (where the use of the T form does not need to match that used for specific reference), [TU] might be preferred to other syntactically equivalent forms if a speaker wishes to appeal to positive politeness in the pursuit of his or her interactional goals.

In the [VOUS] category we noted (4.4.2) how difficult it was, in a group discussion, unambiguously to assign a singular or a plural referent to the use of the pronoun. The greater degree of indeterminacy afforded by this pronoun allowed an 'out' for both speakers and hearers: it was up to the hearer to decide whether a given utterance was addressed to him or her or to a wider group. In terms of generic reference (4.4.3), while [VOUS] does not provide the appeal to solidarity of [TU], it enables a hearer to select from the three values of [VOUS] available: the hearer; a group present which may or may not include the hearer; anyone in a similar situation. Such a degree of indeterminacy provides protection for the face of both speaker and hearer.

Chapter 4 Notes

1. In this study we shall adopt the convention of square brackets to refer to all the realizations of a given pronoun. For example [JE] includes the subject, object, disjunctive and possessive pronouns as well as the determiner. Italics are used to mark a given form of a pronoun, for example *je*, which can only be, in this case, the subject form of the pronoun.
2. All consecutively numbered extracts are taken from our corpus. Supplementary data not described in 3.2 will be described when presented.
3. Judge and Healey's grammar is innovative in terms of grammars written in English for learners of French in so far as it marries a prescriptive with a descriptive approach while making clear which forms belong to the more traditional prescriptive approach.
4. W.L. Chafe (1982:46), in a study of occurrences of first person reference per thousand words in a corpus of English data, found that there were 61.5 occurrences in spoken data compared with 4.6 occurrences in written data.
5. For example, Sir Allan Green, Director of Public prosecutions, upon resigning from office on account of an alleged misdemeanour, provided the following statement, 'I bitterly regret what has happened'. *The Guardian*, 4/10/91.
6. It is interesting that Dousson only uses T, with its potential for marking solidarity (i.e. [- distance]), with his male members of staff. This could possibly be accounted for by the fact that another interpretation of the use of T is bound up with perceptions of power. For Dousson to use the T form with the female members of staff could be interpreted as a lack of respect for their status rather than an expression of solidarity. Thus the underlying status of the participants in the meeting affects and is affected by language choices within the meeting.

Chapter 5 ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL PRONOMINAL REFERENCE IN A
CORPUS OF NATURALLY-OCCURRING SPOKEN FRENCH:
[ON] AND IMPERSONALS

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the personal pronouns in French which semantically encode either speaker or hearer reference. It was argued, in Chapter Two, that the status of [ON] is somewhat different. While grammatically a third person pronoun, [ON] can be used deictically in speech to refer to speakers, hearers and third parties as well as be used for generic reference. Thus, to a much greater extent than the pronouns already examined, the interpretation of on relies on contextual factors. Furthermore, the use and interpretation of on has been perceived as problematic by a number of scholars (Laberge, 1977, Laberge and Sankoff, 1980, Deshaies, 1985, Boutet, 1986, Freyne, 1990). For these reasons and given the large number of occurrences of [ON] in our data, Chapter 5 will be devoted to the study of this pronoun. Also a number of other impersonal linguistic devices which can be used for speaker/hearer reference will be examined.

A primary concern of grammars, whether prescriptive or descriptive, and of a number of scholars investigating

[ON], has been to identify clear examples of its different usages: this was a prerequisite to Laberge and Sankoff's (1980) variationist study of the pronouns [TU], [VOUS] and [ON] as variants of each other in contexts of generality. This type of approach, while using naturally-occurring data, rarely takes into account the roles of speakers and hearers in a speech situation in constructing and deciphering meaning. More importantly, nor does it, as Boutet (1986) points out, take account of:

propriétés comme l'ambiguïté et l'indécidabilité

properties such as ambiguity and the impossibility of deciding on one value

Boutet's article clearly illustrates the degree of indeterminacy of *on* and proposes a model which takes account of the properties mentioned above. However, she does say:

Un domaine d'étude reste de ce fait inanalysé; c'est celui du *fonctionnement dans l'interaction* de "on".

One area of study has not, however, been subjected to analysis; that of how "on" *functions in interaction*. (Boutet, 1986:46)

This is precisely the area which has been skirted in Laberge and Sankoff's work. This omission is illustrated by their analysis of the following example where an elderly female informant, b., is being interviewed:

- a. Quel Âge avez-vous?
- b. Je dis pas d'âge moi. Je parle pas des âges; on parle pas de ça aux femmes, des âges.
- a. How old are you?
- b. I don't say any age. I don't talk about ages. *One* doesn't talk about that to women, about ages.

Laberge and Sankoff, 1980:290

Here Laberge and Sankoff state that 'this is clearly both a refusal to reply and a counterattack; the asker is reproached for asking'; but they then go on to claim that the co-variant of [ON], *vous* could not be used in this context as a generic because this would too clearly imply the asker as referent. They argue therefore that the use of [ON] here must be generic. From the point of view of politeness theory, we would argue that the speaker's use of [ON] has, at one and the same time, a specific value (you the asker, me the speaker, etc.) and a generic value (people). It is the indeterminacy of [ON] which allows the speaker to protect her face and that of her interlocutor.

In this chapter we shall first look at the different contextual factors, both linguistic and extralinguistic, which enable speakers to assign referents to [ON]. We shall examine the work of Laberge and Sankoff (1980) in particular because it is their study which has been most influential in this area. Then we shall look at how the

very indeterminacy of [ON] makes it a particularly powerful resource for interactional politeness.

5.1 Syntactic, lexical and discourse indicators of the referent of [ON]

If we adopt the type of linguistic analysis outlined in Chapter One (1.1), it soon becomes clear that very little can be said, on purely linguistic grounds, about the use of [ON] in this corpus. Nevertheless, while linguistic factors provide very little hard and fast evidence for the referent of [ON], they can, on pragmatic grounds, guide the listener in the attribution of a referent.

Laberge and Sankoff (1980) and Boutet (1986) have identified a number of indicators which, either individually or in combination, may orient the listener towards one rather than another interpretation of *on*. However, as we shall see, they rarely eliminate ambiguity altogether. These indicators include:

- (i) co-reference;
- (ii) lexical and syntactic indicators of genericity and specificity (adverbs of time and place, tense, implicative and presentative constructions), and;

- (iii) the discourse indicator of repair (self- or other-initiated).

5.1.1 Co-reference

John Lyons (1977:660-661) looks at co-referentiality in relation to pronominal reference. As we have seen (1.1.2), pronouns have two distinct, though related functions: deixis and anaphora. In the Bloomfieldian tradition an anaphoric pronoun was said to refer to its antecedent. It is this cohesive function of the pronoun which Halliday and Hasan (1976:281) illustrate with the following example:

John took Mary to the dance. John was left all alone.

They ask, 'how do we know it's the same John?' and answer 'if you want to make it clear that it is the same John, don't call him *John*; call him *he*'. So here, according to their perspective, one function of the pronoun is that of disambiguation.

Lyons, however, adopts an alternative formulation of anaphoric reference. The pronoun is not said to refer to its antecedent but rather to 'the referent of the antecedent expression with which it is correlated'. This

formulation takes account of the potential ambiguity of the following example:

My friend looked up when he came in

Here, the pronoun *he* may be being used as a cohesive device having the same referent as and substituting for the antecedent *my friend*. In this case it will be co-referential with that noun phrase. It is also possible that *he* is being used deictically to refer to a different (male or animal) referent recoverable from the context of utterance. Lyons concludes (1977:661) 'whether the pronoun is interpreted as having anaphoric or deictic reference (or both) would seem to depend upon the context-of-utterance and cannot be decided within a micro-linguistic analysis of the structure and meaning of the sentence'. In short, where coreferentiality is possible (as it is not in sentences such as 'He came in and my friend looked up') it is never certain.

Bearing in mind the fact that co-referential pronouns will therefore always be ambiguous when taken in isolation from other contextual factors, it is nonetheless useful to look at certain lexical and syntactic indicators of coreferentiality (pronoun, noun or noun phrase in apposition or as a complement, coreferential possessive adjective) which may be of some help to a hearer in

assigning a potential referent to a given use of a pronoun.

In the following extract from our corpus, Dousson the editor is arguing against moving film coverage from Wednesdays to another day and justifying his position by saying that Wednesday should be retained as it is the day when the cinemas change their programmes:

- (1) (D) le cinéma c'est le grand public c'est mercredi les films
 changent le mercredi *on* va pas changer *nous*

Here, the pronoun *nous* appears to be co-referential with *on*. In this case what can be said about *on* is that it is used to refer to [+speaker], [+minimal group] unless there is evidence to the contrary.

In the following extract, it is clear that the speaker reference *me* cannot be co-referential with *on* and therefore we can say that this use of *on* is [-speaker]:

- (2) (MX) mais *on* *me* dit fais...

There is only one sequence in the entire corpus where what seem to be the referents of *on* are identified by name. In this extract, the journalist Guillot is complaining about understaffing in his department and the sacrifices he and

a colleague have had to make to keep their section running over the summer period:

- (3) (G) *on* (1) est déjà *deux* en vacances puisque *Joëlle et moi-même* *on* (2) n'a pas choisi spécialement de se (2b) mettre ensemble c'est parce que d'autres gens ont décidé de prendre déjà août et septembre c'est nous qui avons au contraire décalé nos vacances et euh travaillé une semaine où *on* (3) est *tous les deux ensemble* *on* (4) n'a pas pu complètement faire correspondre nos programmes

In this text *on* (1) and (3) appear to be co-referential with *deux* which suggests [+minimal group] and in (2) with *Joëlle et moi-même* which as well as naming the referents provides us with [+ speaker]. This is supported by the fact that *nos* is probably co-referential with *on* (4) and *on* (2) is probably co-referential with *c'est nous qui*.

Thus, there appears to be a high degree of co-referentiality in this sequence which would doubtless lead the hearer to assume that all instances of *on* and of *nous* are coreferential and indeed refer to the speaker Guillot and his colleague Joëlle. Nonetheless, such an interpretation derives from pragmatic ('be relevant') and not linguistic considerations.

Laberge and Sankoff (1980:276) isolate coreferential *le*, *la*, *les* and coreferential indefinite noun phrases as syntactic indicators of generalization. They contrast '*On choisit les amis*' with '*On choisit nos amis*'. Two parallel

examples from our corpus would be:

(4) (P1) *on représente le journal*

(5) (D) *on représente notre titre*

Laberge and Sankoff argue that the former is more likely to be a generalised statement. This may be true at a statistical level but may not be a significant consideration when a speaker comes to interpret an utterance, for such predictions do not take into account the context-of-utterance, which in the case of extracts (4) and (5), would suggest that *le* and *notre* in utterances (4) and (5) are coreferential.

This probable co-referentiality can be seen in the following extract which provides a wider textual context for (4) and (5) above, where one of the photographers has overheard a local dignitary complaining that the newspapers ought to try always to send the same people:

(6) (P1) *c'est tout là notre présence nous de d'un rédacteur comme Jean-Jacques ou puis d'un photographe comme moi bon ben c'est sûr on représente on (1) représente le journal c'est plus sérieux bien sûr que d'avoir un correspondant de ce côté-là () notre présence notre présence...*

(D) *n'oubliez pas que chaque fois comme tu dis on (2) représente notre titre le fait de se déplacer quelque part pour les gens c'est Lyon Matin qui vient vers eux...*

Here both speakers arguably make the same reference; the photographer says *on représente le journal* and this is

interpreted as a specific reference by the editor who metalinguistically refers to this phrase (*comme tu dis*) before re-expressing it in his own words *on représente notre titre*. Furthermore, it could be argued that *on* (1) is used to corefer to *notre présence nous de d'un rédacteur comme Jean-Jacques ou puis d'un photographe comme moi..* Thus we have one possible interpretation of both utterances [+ specific] [+ minimal group] [+ speaker] [+ hearer].

However, an alternative interpretation is equally possible. The photographer moves from the specific (*notre présence*) to giving an example of what he means: an (any?) editor like Jean-Jacques and a (any?) photographer like himself. He identifies specific individuals but raises them to the level of prototypes by the use of *un ... comme* which suggests genericity: his point about representing the newspaper would remain true whoever were the editor or the photographer, and whichever were the newspaper. What is particularly significant here is that this interpretation would give [- specific]. In the example above both the specific and the generic values of [ON] are current in the conversation.

Thus it can be seen that while coreference may enable a hearer to eliminate certain potential referents of *on* or even to assign a referent to it, coreference itself is

assumed to exist on extralinguistic rather than properly linguistic grounds.

5.1.2 Temporal indicators of genericity/specificity

An initial analysis of the 163 occurrences of [ON] in our corpus shows that while all of the occurrences can have a specific interpretation, not all allow a generic interpretation.

Laberge and Sankoff identify certain lexical and syntactic markers which may co-occur with [ON] and which point towards a general (generic or indefinite or unspecified third person) interpretation of the pronoun. Many of these work towards disassociating the reference from specific times and places. In particular, they mention constructions such as *à travailler, à lire*; synonyms for 'nowadays', *aujourd'hui, de nos jours, à c't heure*; the French for 'always' *toujours*; and tense changes from the past to the present. Comrie (1985:40) points out that the interpretation of a sentence such as 'cows eat grass' as being a universal truth derives from structural and extralinguistic evidence beyond the meaning of the present tense. This universality can be made explicit, he adds, by the inclusion of a time adverbial such as *always*. Nevertheless, the fact remains that genericity is not the only value present: universal truths can also be read as

particular truths or as truths which have held true up until the moment of utterance.

We identified only two occurrences of *on* with an adverb which dissociates it from a specified time reference: *toujours* and its antonym *jamaïs*, both of which allowed a specific and a generic interpretation. For example, in (7) below, a journalist is complaining bitterly that cinema always receives better treatment than other areas of the arts (for instance theatre):

(7) (W1) *on fait toujours* priorité au cinéma mais...

This, according to Laberge and Sankoff's analysis, would be a prime example of a generic use of [ON]. Nonetheless, a specific interpretation is also strongly suggested by context. We shall analyse this example later in 5.3.1 where it will be our contention that it is politeness which reconciles the two values.

A corollary of the hypothesis that lexical and syntactic markers which disassociate a reference from a specific time and place may point towards a general interpretation is that markers which associate an utterance to time and place may tend to have a specific interpretation.

According to Comrie (1985:8) there are three types of expression for locating in time: **lexically composite phrases** (e.g. *il y a six mois*), **lexical items** (e.g. *hier*) and **grammatical categories** (i.e. tense). Tense is essentially a deictic system (1985:14) which generally takes the speech situation as the deictic centre and which situates time **absolutely** in reference to the moment of utterance or **relatively** to some point given by the context. Furthermore, while primary meanings of tense have to do with location in time, tenses may also fulfill other functions, for example 'the use of the past tense in polite requests, as in *I just wanted to ask you if you could lend me a pound*' (1985:19). Comrie argues that while tenses have meanings which are context-independent, some of which are more basic than others, it is also possible that a tense will receive particular interpretations in particular contexts. Thus pragmatic factors are important in determining whether a tense is used to refer to a location in time or for any other purpose. This is particularly true in the case of what is termed the 'historic present' where a present tense is used to refer to past events (see 4.1)

Does the presence of markers which associate an utterance to a time and place lead to a specific interpretation of the pronoun [ON]? While the present tense with [ON] can perform both a specific and an indefinite or 'universal

truth' function, the co-occurrence of this personal pronoun with an indicative past tense verb in a main clause appears to eliminate a generic interpretation. For example, in example (7) above, we saw how *on* could function for both specific and generic reference. However, a statement such as:

(8) ce qu'*on* a essayé d'éviter hier soir c'était...

cannot have a generic meaning and must be used to refer to one or more individuals who had acted as agents in this instance.

There were 37 occurrences of [ON] in our corpus with a past tense verb, all of which appeared to exclude generic reference.

Similarly, a reference to future time eliminates a generic interpretation. There were 34 references to [ON] with verbs indicating future time whether by a future tense morpheme encoded in the verb:

(9) (G) *on* verra bien ce qui en découlera

or by the composite tense '*aller* + infinitive':

- (10) (L) j'aimerais bien se faire la main peut-être alors sur
Vénissieux sur St Fons c'est à dire *on va changer*
l'operation *on va faire des jeux on va faire des jeux*

and one conditional tense:

- (11) (L) oui je pense bien qu'*on pourrait* parler des fêtes

There were also 5 occurrences where lexically composite phrases or lexical items located the use of a present tense in time and which thus restricted the interpretation of *on* to a specific one. For example:

- (12) (D) c'est un souci qu'*on a depuis des mois*

Temporal indicators provide some insight into the type of pragmatic knowledge a hearer will need to draw on to interpret a given use of [ON]: in the case of past reference, knowledge of past events and in the case of future reference a knowledge of the speaker's role, status, attitudes and purpose.

The limitations of using temporal indicators to assign referents to uses of [ON] should have become obvious. The most this analysis can tell us is that while all the uses of *on* can have a specific interpretation, 53% can also have a generic interpretation. So while temporal indicators can eliminate one possible value of [ON], the

generic, they tell us nothing about the potential referent of the pronoun.

5.1.3 Implicative constructions

Implicative constructions are another category singled out by Laberge and Sankoff (1980:277) as indicators of a general value assigned to the pronoun. They consist of two utterances, a supposition (protasis) and the implications (apodosis) and these utterances can be coordinate (i) or simply juxtaposed (ii). Laberge and Sankoff give the following examples:

- (i) Bien si *on* laisse faire les hommes c'est tout' (sic) des grosses bêtes
- (ii) Vous allez voir deux Français de France, puis ils parleront pas tous les deux pareil

In our corpus there are 24 occurrences where an implicative construction can suggest the generality of a proposition. For example, when Yves talks about a philosophy teacher he has interviewed:

- (13) (Y) mais quand *on* discute avec lui non mais quand *on* oublie sa physionomie quand *on* se montre tolérant il a un discours des plus intéressants

Here *quand* could have the sense of 'whenever' and thus the value of *on* could be that of 'anyone'. However, an

alternative interpretation is also possible: *quand* could have the sense of 'when' and be used by the speaker to refer to one or more identifiable occasion (the use of the present tense functioning as a historic present), in which case it is possible that *on* is being used to refer to a specific unnamed referent.

In the following example from our corpus, the presence of what may be a coreferential [NOUS] (see 5.1.(i)) makes the specific value of *on* particularly salient. Indeed the primary interpretation may be that of 'we'. Here the generic value is merely present in the discourse.

- (14) (D) c'est comme si *on* se mettait à dire que le sport nous
 intéresse plus et que les quartiers ne nous intéressent
 plus

In the following extract the reference to a specific time in the apodosis has been argued to exclude general reference altogether (see 5.1.(ii)). If the two occurrences of *on* are co-referential, then a generic value for the *on* of the apodosis would not be possible.

- (15) (G) si *on* n'a pas un qui est affecté aux faits divers *on*
 tournera pas cet été

Implicative constructions are useful to this analysis insofar as they indicate the possibility of a generic

interpretation, even where this is not necessarily the most relevant value of the pronoun in a given context.

5.1.4 Repair

Unlike the preceding sections, repair does not belong to the category of L-pragmatic arguments (1.1) but rather is to do with the organization of discourse and 'is a speech activity during which speakers locate and replace a prior speech unit' (Schriffrin, 1987:74). Repair is an important notion in recent work on discourse and conversational analysis (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977, Levinson 1983, etc.) insofar as it occurs where communication for one reason or another does not meet the communicative requirements of the speaker or hearer. It can thus throw light on the underlying assumptions of what these requirements may be. In the case of perceived ambiguity, it might be assumed that repair would generally orient towards making meanings more explicit. Thus, in the case of the indeterminate pronoun [ON], we might expect to find the use of repair where the referent of [ON] is perceived not to be sufficiently explicit for the purposes of the speaker or the hearer. Indeed, such is the case in the following extract, (part of which we have already examined in 5.1.1 where it was shown that the referent is presupposed to be speaker-exclusive). Here, repair takes the form of identification by name. One of the journalists

is talking about difficulties he has experienced in obtaining an extended face-to-face interview with a star, in this case the French singer Alain Souchon:

- (16) (MX) mais *on* me dit fais... Jacquotte me dit fais pas de problèmes tu fais une interview par téléphone je dis non moi je refuse les interviews par téléphone ça me paraît pas sérieux

This is an instance of self-initiated repair where the speaker chooses to name the previously unidentified individual who advised him to carry out an interview by telephone providing the most determinate reference possible.

Nonetheless, as was seen in 4.2.1 in the discussion of [NOUS], a repair need not render the referent of a pronoun more explicit if a speaker values the indeterminacy afforded by a certain pronominal choice. We observed that Jacques Chancel, when invited by the interviewer to confirm that by *nous* he in fact meant *je*, offered a repair in the form of *on*, which provided him with an even greater degree of indeterminacy.

However these two examples are instances of particularly extreme forms of repair. In the remainder of the cases of repair which occurred in our data, the consequence was to eliminate or reduce the prominence of one potential interpretation of [ON].

In the following repair, Dousson, the speaker, is referring to an event to take place in a certain district of Lyon where he believes that (an) individual(s) should go down and check things out on the spot:

- (17) (D) tout est... oui ça oui il y a ça aussi mais il faudra qu'on y prenne garde mais *on va il faudra aller voir* sur place ce qui se passe...

Here Dousson has substituted the impersonal *il faudra* for *on va*. Leaving aside the change in modalisation (*falloir* replacing *aller*), what might be the effect of this repair? Laberge and Sankoff suggest that the association of [ON] with [NOUS] is so great that ''we' has become the unmarked, unless-otherwise-indicated reading of *on*' (1980:274). If this is so, it is conceivable that by changing the pronoun used (i.e. moving from [ON] with its strong sense of speaker inclusion towards the impersonal construction *il faudra*), Dousson is dispelling any implication that he, in person, will be in any way responsible for this particular task.

However, Laberge and Sankoff's argument above still suggests that a speaker or hearer is only working with one value for [ON] at any given time. Consider the following extract. Here, the journalist Jean-Pierre, in response to a request to raise any further relevant issues, refers to the need to ensure better coverage of musical events and

in particular to employ someone to cover this area. He prefaces this suggestion with the criticism that there is a lack of music coverage:

- (18) (JP) *moi je trouve qu'on a assez mal couvert c'est peut-être une part d'autocritique la journée de musique*

One interpretation of this repair on the part of Jean-Pierre (i.e. when he makes the point that he too is partly to blame for the lack of music coverage *c'est peut-être une part d'autocritique*), is that he is aware of the fact that one use of *on* (amongst the many which may circulate in the conversation) is exclusive of the speaker and in this context might imply that other people (you, Dousson or you the meeting) are in some way to blame for this lapse. For whilst [ON] covaries with speaker-inclusive [NOUS] it can also covary with the speaker-exclusive [VOUS]/[IL(S)/ELLE(S)]. It is possible that Jean-Pierre is aware that this value also circulates in the conversation and that he therefore might be interpreted as using *on* to avoid personal blame (see 4.2.1). He may therefore have engaged in self-repair in order to avoid that particular conversational inference being made.

Finally, we have one example from our corpus where repair serves to modify the impression that the referent of this occurrence of [ON] co-refers to a use of [ON] in a

previous utterance. In the following example, Luc appears to be backing up Dousson's argument that, in the interests of public relations, Lyon Matin has to be seen to be making an effort and to send their own people out on assignments and not just use part-time staff:

(19) (D) n'oubliez pas que chaque fois comme tu dis *on* représente notre titre... le fait de se déplacer quelque part... pour les gens c'est Lyon Matin qui vient vers eux... alors un correspondant bon ben ils disent ils nous traitent par dessus la jambe

(L) le reproche qu'*on* (1) peut faire... mettons si aux faits divers *on* (2) *envoyait*... *s'ils ne voyaient pas* toujours les mêmes gars hein... il y a des services la Police la Gendarmerie aiment bien toujours avoir M. Guillot avoir M. un tel ou un tel... comme en politique de voir M. Bacot ou quelqu'un suppléant... mais ça pose un problème de...

We have already seen (5.1.3) that an implicative construction allows a generic interpretation and that one interpretation of such a use of [ON] would be 'anyone'. We also saw that [ON] could also have a specific interpretation (which in this case could be the public, *on* (1) being interpreted as co-referential with the *ils* of Dousson's previous utterance). In this case, the value of exclusive reference is strongly present in the utterance. Knowledge of who is responsible for sending the same reporters suggests that here *on* (2) is used inclusively to refer to Lyon Matin itself and the speaker and hearers as part of this corporate body. Luc may have felt that *ils*

was more clearly co-referential with *on* (1) and for this reason repaired this utterance.

The examples above do show that that the use of [ON] can be problematic for speakers and hearers and that different values may be present in discourse. However, what is striking in all the data we have examined is that, given its range of indeterminacy, there is not more self- or other-initiated repair or challenges by hearers about the precise intended referent of *on*. Thus in the absence of any further research into this aspect, our corpus would lead us to concur with Boutet when she says (1986:49):

...il est probable que la plupart du temps l'incompréhension n'est pas révélée et que chaque participant de l'échange linguistique poursuit son discours en ayant attribué à *on* un sens, une interprétation, distincts de ceux attribués par le (ou les) autre(s) participant(s).

...it is probable that most of the time misunderstanding does not become apparent and that each participant in the speech situation continues with the dialogue having attributed a meaning or an interpretation to *on* which is different to those accorded to it by the other participant(s).

5.1.5 Concluding remarks

In this section we have examined three L-pragmatic and one O-pragmatic factors to investigate to what extent they enable speakers to use and hearers to interpret the pronoun [ON]. It was argued (5.1.1) that while co-reference, as a concept, depends on extra-linguistic

factors it can be of use either in eliminating one or more potential values of [ON] or even, on occasion, in assigning a referent to a given occurrence of the pronoun. Temporal indicators (5.1.2) were a better indicator of specificity than genericity; reference to past time eliminated a generic use of [ON]. Conversely, implicative constructions (5.1.3) allowed a generic, in addition to a specific interpretation of the pronoun. Repair (5.1.4) was not as prevalent as might have been expected given the indeterminacy of the pronoun [ON] and, in our corpus, rather than enabling a speaker to assign a precise referent to [ON], it allowed speakers to eliminate implicatures which they wished to avoid. In short, the lexical, syntactic and discoursal factors studied above are of very little help in assigning a referent to a given use of [ON]: at best they enable a hearer to eliminate one or more potential values of the pronoun. In section 5.2 we shall look at extra-linguistic contextual factors to see to what extent they can help in assigning a referent to [ON].

5.2 Extra-linguistic contextual indicators of the referent of [ON]

Given the evident limitations of purely linguistic factors in indicating the referent of [ON], in this section we

have turned our attention to contextual factors to examine to what extent these can be useful in interpreting [ON].

The categories of contextual knowledge which proved most useful to this analysis are the following:

(i) Knowledge of past actions.

(ii) Knowledge of participant roles and status.

In this section, each of these indicators will be examined to see in what ways they can assist in the interpretation of [ON].

5.2.1 Knowledge of past actions

As we saw in 5.1.2, the referent of past-time utterances can generally be located through a knowledge of past actions. For example, for those with the requisite background knowledge, it can be possible to assign precise referents to certain past-tense occurrences of [ON]. For example, a photographer is recounting a recent incident:

- (20) (P) mardi *on* a eu du boulot... *on* était parti à la Duchère...
et ça signifie des déplacements de photographes... et
récemment *on* a fait exactement la même photo à dix minutes
près quoi... qui sont apparues le même jour un(e) à
quartiers un(e) à sport

In order to assign precise referents to these three uses of [ON] all that is needed is the knowledge of who went to la Duchère and who took the photographs.

Laberge and Sankoff (1980:274)) have stated that the unmarked value of [ON] is that of 'we' 'inclusive'. However, there are instances where knowledge of participants' past actions leads to other interpretations of [ON]: principally [ON] = self-reference ([JE]), and [ON] = other-reference ([ON] = [IL(S)/ELLE(S)], [TU]/[VOUS])). Let us examine some such occurrences below.

(1) [ON] = self-reference

In the following extract, Yves describes to the meeting a colourful character whom he has recently interviewed, a philosophy teacher in a local school who was required by his headmaster to visit a psychiatrist:

- (21) (Y) mais c'est un type remarquable à part ça (à part ça quoi?)
franchement mais quand on discute avec lui non mais quand
on oublie sa physionomie son aspect quand on se montre
tolérant il a un discours des plus intéressants

As we have already seen, syntactic factors (the implicative construction *quand* + present tense) orient interpretation towards a generic one i.e. that anyone in this particular situation would react in the same way.

However, knowledge of past actions tells us that this situation has actually taken place and that Yves has been in a position to entertain these very same reactions. Therefore, in addition to the generic interpretation of *on* another pragmatically possible interpretation is that [ON] = [JE]. So why should Yves have preferred to use [ON] to the more explicit [JE]? We shall examine this example further in 5.3.

(11) [ON] = other-reference

There are also a number of occurrences of *on* in the corpus where our knowledge of participants' past actions tells us that [ON] cannot have the value of 'we' inclusive. Let us examine the following example.

One of the photographers complains about a lack of coordination which has led to astronomical numbers of films being developed in the labs. The lab technicians are not to blame as they have been asked to do this by someone (*on*):

(22) (P1) il a tout tiré parce qu'*on* lui a dit de tout tirer il a
tout tiré

To identify the referent, all that is needed is knowledge about who gave this advice. A further contextual indicator of this might be a knowledge of participant roles.

In this way, knowledge of past actions appears to be a powerful indicator of the referent of a use of [ON] when this is used in a reference to some past action.

5.2.2 Knowledge of status and participant roles

In Chapter 3, we saw that in addition to the deictic roles adopted by speakers there are also social and discourse roles. Indeed, these roles are closely linked to the two sociological variables of Power and Distance which Brown and Levinson (1987:74-84) identify as being central to their model of how participants in a speech situation assess their own face-wants and those of other co-participants.

Certainly, in our analysis of the corpus, this kind of contextual knowledge proved very useful. While knowledge of past actions helped to assign referents to pronouns occurring in utterances referring to past time, knowledge of roles and status could be used to assign potential referents to utterances dealing with future time. For example, Bernard, the deputy editor, outlines plans for a future event which the newspaper is sponsoring:

- (24) (B) *on va changer l'opération plein feu comme on l'avait faite sur Calvire au début du mois de juin et qui n'avait été que rédactionnelle là aussi... on va mettre l'animation sur les communes mais on doit faire la liste et on peut commencer début septembre*

Here, a knowledge of who is responsible for changing policy, for organising events in the communes, for drawing up a list and for implementing all this would be of considerable use in assigning referents to these different uses of *on*. If the future participants have not yet agreed on their contribution to this event then a potential referent of *on* may simply be *Lyon Matin*; if they have, then it should be possible to ascertain who they are.

In the following example, it is a knowledge of discourse roles which favours a potential interpretation:

(25) (D) alors puis-je vous demander à la rubrique une... est-ce qu'il y a des choses à dire sur la semaine écoulée?

(L) oui je pense qu'*on* pourrait bien parler des fêtes euh

One of the functions of this kind of meeting is to report on work in progress and one of the functions of a chairman of a meeting is to ensure that such matters are discussed. Consequently, when in reply to Dousson's invitation to raise items for discussion, Luc raises the issue of the *fêtes*, it is probable that he is using *on* to refer to 'we = the meeting' or possibly, more restrictively, 'we = those in the meeting who have something relevant to say' and that the referent of *on* is speaker-inclusive insofar as Luc himself goes on to talk about the topic he has raised. Indeed, given the function of the meeting it is

unlikely that any participant would use any pronoun other than [ON] in such circumstances.

Indeed, knowledge of participant roles and status is particularly important in determining whether [ON] is used inclusively [+ speaker] or exclusively [- speaker]. In the following utterance, knowledge of roles suggest that Dousson is using [ON] exclusively [- speaker]:

- (26) (D) je crois simplement que *quand on* est au programme
correspondant de quartiers il faut savoir tout de suite
s'il fait des photos ou pas

As we saw in 5.1.3, the implicative construction of this utterance orients towards a generic interpretation. However, a specific interpretation is also available. Knowledge of Dousson's social role as editor implies that he is not also *correspondant de quartier* (or immediately responsible for) and therefore that the referent of *on* in this instance is exclusive of speaker. Potential referents of *on* are the generic 'anyone' and specifically all those persons potentially responsible for this task.

So while a knowledge of the role of a powerful participant such as Dousson enables us to interpret indirect instructions as such and assign a hearer value to [ON], similar utterances made by participants who do not have the power to give orders are likely to receive a different interpretation. For example, when Luc says:

- (27) (L) ... *il faudra qu'on y prenne garde mais on va... il faudra aller voir sur place ce qui se passe*

the hearer is more likely to assign a [+ speaker] value to *on* given the fact that Luc's role and status in the meeting do not necessarily enable him to issue instructions. Had this utterance been made by Dousson the primary interpretation may have been [- speaker]. In any case, all the potential referents of *on* remain current in the conversation and it is this multiplicity of potential referents which is of interest from the point of view of politeness and which will be discussed in 5.3..

There are also examples of occurrences of [ON] where there is conflict between a syntactically suggested referent (in this case the generic 'anyone') and a referent suggested by knowledge of status and roles (in this case [- speaker]). In the following extract, a relatively powerless woman reporter is complaining about the priority given to cinema:

- (28) (W) *on fait toujours priorité au cinéma mais*
 (D) *le cinéma c'est le grand public c'est mercredi les films changent le mercredi on va pas changer nous*

Syntactically the listener is oriented towards a generic interpretation because of the temporal adverb *toujours*.

However, we know that Dousson is ultimately responsible for articulating Lyon Matin policy and that he must therefore be the one who always gives priority to the cinema. Thus the two main potential referents are 'anyone' [+ generic] and Dousson [+ specific], [- speaker] [+ hearer] [- minimal group].

In this section, we have seen that the status and the participant role of a participant (or, in Brown and Levinson's terms (1987:74-5), the participants' assumptions about the variables of Power and Distance) is an extremely important factor in favouring a given interpretation of [ON]. This had already been identified as a critical factor in interpreting hedges as strengthening or weakening the illocutionary force of an utterance (4.1) and illustrates to what extent pragmatic factors may prove more powerful than purely linguistic ones in interpreting speech.

5.2.4 Concluding remarks

In this section we have seen that unlike syntactic, lexical and discourse indicators of reference which, for the most part, eliminated only certain potential values of [ON], the extra-linguistic knowledge outlined above proved extremely useful in assigning referents to [ON]. Knowledge of past actions (5.2.1) can enable a hearer to assign a

referent to a use of [ON] in utterances located in past time and a knowledge of status and roles (5.2.2) can indicate reference in utterances located in future time. Furthermore, when a knowledge of status and roles did not itself suggest a referent, it could be used to eliminate or the speaker from or include him or her in the potential referent. However, we also saw that in all these cases, the referents were selected on the basis of presupposition and that in some cases the referent presupposed by one of these categories conflicted with a referent presupposed by another, for example, where a generic and a specific interpretation are both possible or where a specific interpretation can be interpreted as being used to refer to different individuals or groups (5.2.2). It is the contention of this study that where there are conflicting interpretations of a pronoun in the context of a FTA, the speaker has available the option of exploiting the indeterminacy afforded by the pronoun [ON] to protect face. Furthermore, it will also be argued that a knowledge of linguistic politeness can function as a contextual indicator of the referent of [ON].

5.3 Politeness phenomena as indicators of the referent of [ON]

5.3.0 Introduction

Section 5.2 investigated extra-linguistic contextual factors which may help a hearer assign a referent to [ON]. These contextual indicators may support syntactic, lexical and discourse indicators (5.1) thereby decreasing the apparent indeterminacy of the pronoun for the hearer. Conversely, as was seen in example (30), they may contradict such interpretations thereby increasing the potential range of values for [ON] relevant to the hearer. It is these 'problematic' uses of [ON] which will be examined in this section.

It has already been suggested (5.2.4) that it is when more than one value of [ON] is present in conversation that the speaker is able to reconcile the twin desires of putting something on record (committing a face-threatening act) and of protecting the face of both speaker and hearer. Consequently an understanding of politeness strategies is a further indicator hearers may employ in order to assign a referent to [ON]. It will be argued furthermore that the pronoun [ON], with its potential for both inclusive and exclusive reference, provides a resource for both positive and negative politeness.

Therefore this section will aim to show, by the examination of problematic uses of [ON] in potentially Face-Threatening-Situations, that where there is a mismatch between what is said and what is implicated, a

knowledge of the contextual factors discussed above (5.2) and a knowledge of politeness strategies (1.2.3) can demonstrate the function of the pronoun [ON] in saving the face both of speakers and hearers.

Given the potential of [ON] to cover the referential ground covered by all the personal pronouns analysed so far (Chapter 4) as well as those used for non-speaker/hearer reference [IL(S)/ELLE(S)], it has not been possible to establish sub-categorisations for this part of the study. Instead, each of the eight examples will be dealt with individually.

5.3.1 Example 1

In extract (29) below there is a major disagreement between the editor and the features editor, Guillot:

- (29) (G) je dis tout de suite moi j'ouvre ma bouche parce que les services me sont complètement tombés dans le dos... à savoir les faits divers qui tournent jour et nuit et douze mois sur douze qui est pas le cas de toutes les rubriques je regrette et si *on* n'a pas un qui est affecté aux faits divers *on* tournera pas cet été
- (D) je crois hélas que il y en aura pas d'affecté spécifiquement aux faits divers
- (G) eh bien *on* tournera là un gars de jour et un gars de nuit ma foi *on* verra bien ce qui en découlera s'il y a des problèmes mais j'ai tout repoussé d'un calendrier à un autre pour se débrouiller en été c'est pas possible
- (D) non je crois que malheureusement *on* peut pas *on* peut pas (mais je) il y a deux stagiaires d'été *on* ne peut pas en affecter un uniquement au services faits divers

(G) OK je suis désolé

(D) si on a la possibilité on le fera mais a priori fixer son affectation aux faits divers me paraît euh

In this extract Guillot is complaining about what he considers to be chronic undermanning in the *service faits divers* (for which he is responsible) over the summer period and is calling for one of the trainees the paper is taking on over the summer to be assigned to this section. Dousson, in whose gift these trainees are, is refusing to commit himself. His response could be interpreted as an unequivocal no.

What is interesting about this extract is that while the argument is essentially between Dousson, the editor who has the power to provide an extra trainee, and Guillot who is responsible for a particular page and who is claiming that he cannot carry out his job without extra manning, Dousson uses the pronoun [ON] for what, by implicature, is self-reference.

Dousson is essentially refusing to cooperate with Guillot's request and as such is threatening Guillot's positive face. He mitigates his first refusal with a panoply of features which could be explained by politeness. He hedges (*je crois*), expresses regret (*hélas*), is pessimistic, deletes the agent of the decision

agent (*il n'y aura pas*), mitigates refusal (*spécifiquement*).

However, Dousson is further pressed on the point and replies, after more hedging, by saying that *on* cannot assign a trainee only to the features department, *on ne peut pas en affecter un uniquement au service faits divers*. He follows this with the promise, the agent of which is also *on* - *si on en a la possibilité on le fera*. It has already been argued (5.2.3) that knowledge of participant roles enables a hearer to assign the referent of *on* to the speaker, in this case Dousson himself, as it is his responsibility to allocate staffing. Dousson even implies that he is responsible for taking this decision (*j'ai eu quatre demandes de correspondants*), using the determinate [JE] to refer to the fact that the applications have been made to him personally by the trainees. So could the use of *on* be part of a politeness strategy to mitigate his refusal and to save face?

In addition to the interpretation (based on contextual factors) of *on* as self-reference, there is the value of *on* as meaning 'we' inclusive, in this case the corporate 'we' of *Lyon Matin*. This allows for the implicature that the refusal is not personal but rather emanates from the newspaper itself. Thus Dousson can appeal to his institutional role as editor rather than his personal role

to make this refusal. Furthermore, he protects his own face against a potential challenge to the refusal insofar as this would therefore be directed at *Lyon Marin* rather than at him himself.

In this example, therefore, [ON] provides the speaker with the opportunity to protect his own face and that of the hearer by allowing him to dissociate himself personally from the face-threatening act of giving a refusal by appealing to the authority of the institution he represents.

5.3.2 Example 2

According to Brown and Levinson (1987:65-6), reminders, along with orders, requests, suggestions, advice, threats, warnings and dares all primarily threaten the hearer's negative face insofar as they predicate some future act of H. Implicit in this is the fact that the speaker is not going to respect the hearer's freedom of action.

Reminders are a recurrent feature of the talk of Dousson. These utterances refer back to decisions taken within the current meeting or others taken in the series of meetings and all make use of the pluperfect tense. These decisions have all, at some point, been summarised and articulated by Dousson himself. Let us examine some of them:

- (30) (D) donc on avait dit qu'on envoyait un photographe
- (31) (D) je crois qu'on avait dit d'essayer de faire un temps fort
sur chaque secteur un jour par semaine
- (32) (D) on avait dit un temps fort par semaine
- (33) (D) la preuve en est faite on l'avait dit
- (34) (D) s'il vous plaît on avait dit pas d'apartés

Interestingly, all of the occurrences of *on* listed above occur in contexts of face-threatening activity (leaving aside the fact that a reminder is, for Brown and Levinson, in itself a FTA). It would not be unreasonable for a recipient of a reminder, on the assumption of relevance, to interpret this speech act as a directive, i.e. an instruction to take action on the matter referred to. Furthermore, all the above utterances share the common feature of using the verb *dire*, 'to say', a verb which, when taken literally, is generally associated with one speaker. However, another meaning of the verb is 'to decide' and (where the verb is used to refer to the speaker and one or more others) 'to agree' (Robert: 1973:486). We shall examine the evidence for the view that it may be pragmatic considerations, and in particular those of politeness, which motivate the use of *on* in these contexts and will focus on utterances (34) and (30).

Utterance (34) *s'il vous plaît on avait dit pas d'apartés* does not require an extensive co-text as it is situated

within the general context of the meeting. Dousson is chair and therefore he is responsible for authorising interventions from the floor and also for approving the topic of discussion. In this capacity he wishes to continue discussion on a topic he considers to be relevant (how to ensure good holiday coverage) and he cuts off what he deems to be interruptions with this utterance. Thus he uses a reminder mitigated by a conventional request formula (*s'il vous plait*) and emphasised by a brusque hand gesture to carry out a potentially face-threatening act, that of denying others the right to participate in the meeting on their own terms.

If we understand *dire* in the literal sense outlined above, it may be possible that Dousson is referring back to an utterance he made earlier in the same meeting, *ne mélangeons pas tout*, which he said to impose direction on the discussion at a point where a journalist brought up a topic which Dousson did not consider relevant at that juncture; alternatively he may be referring to an instruction given before recording began to the participants not to talk all at once (recorder's note). If Dousson is referring back to either of these utterances, why should he prefer to use the indeterminate [ON] to the more explicit [JE]?

One possible explanation is the following: if this FTA (denying others the right to speak) were challenged, then the challenge would be directed against the referent of [JE] whether Dousson as an individual or Dousson in his role as editor of Lyon Matin, possibly initiating thereby an escalation in threats to face.

However, Dousson, by using *on*, can shift the implication of *dire* from 'to say' to 'to agree' (*j'ai dit* = I said, *on a dit* = we agreed) and appeal to the positive politeness strategy of assuming agreement between speaker and hearer. Furthermore, insofar as his instruction not to stray from the topic under discussion, and consequently his power as a chairperson to determine topic, was not challenged when he first made it, it would seem reasonable to assume that all those present were in agreement and would stand by the decision. Thus, the use of [ON] protects the speaker from any potential challenge and its concomitant threat to face. For a challenge would not, in this case, be directed at Dousson as an individual or even in his capacity as chairperson of the meeting but at those present whose agreement on the principle could be assumed (making the challenger also an element of the challenged). Thus, it is even possible that the value of [ON] = 'you' is relevant within the discussion (you agreed to it, so you stand by it).

So if we take the sense of *dire* in these utterances as that of an unspoken agreement (whether on the function of the chairman or on the groundrules of these meetings), then it is possible for Dousson to invoke this unspoken agreement to justify what is essentially a FTA, i.e. denying someone the right to speak when they choose and denying them the right to speak on the topic they choose. Furthermore, by implying (through the value of [ON] = 'we') that everyone is of the same view, he could be said to be employing the strategy of 'claiming common ground', a major component of what Brown and Levinson call positive politeness. Furthermore, such a strategy renders his statements more difficult to challenge: a challenger is potentially challenging not just Dousson but the newspaper itself and, most of all, a decision which he or she has previously agreed with.

This use of [ON] in this example to refer to a 'corporate we' is different from that of the previous example (5.3.1 (1)) where Dousson was able to dissociate himself from what he perceived as a FTA from which the hearer was already, by implication, dissociated. In this example what is implied is that both speaker and hearer are included in and support what is proposed; indeed the force of the use of *on* here is to deny the existence of a potential FTA.

5.3.3 Example 3

The following extract is taken from midway through a long discussion about the respective responsibilities of journalists and photographers. The photographers are concerned because the journalists are suggesting that they are able to take photographs and thus on occasion dispense with the photographers' services. Dousson feels that this issue has already been discussed and that it was agreed that both a photographer and a journalist would be sent:

- (35) (D) *il était prévu il était prévu au départ que comme le correspondant était sur place on fai... c'était nous qui faisons faire des photos par notre service photos... ça avait été annoncé ici en réunion et ça a été confirmé depuis... parce que le correspondant c'est une occasion pour lui d'avoir des contacts avec les associations etcetéra donc il ne peut pas à la fois prendre des notes faire des photos et boire un verre avec les élus ou les associations du coin (exactement) donc on avait dit qu'on envoyait un photographe pour moi c'était clair alors effectivement on va le préciser cette semaine hein Luc et Joceline ce soir avec Christian Renaud et Zoras vous leur dites qu'il y a un photographe de la maison point final...*

In this turn, Dousson is particularly forceful: he outlines a previous policy decision (*il était prévu*), he reminds the meeting that it had already been announced in a previous meeting (*ça avait été annoncé ici en réunion*), that it had been confirmed at a later date (*ça a été confirmé depuis*). He then reiterates the reasons which led to this decision, summarizes the decision again and then instructs two journalists to relay this information to two individuals not present at the meeting. Dousson has certainly violated the Gricean maxim of quantity by

reiterating several times information assumed to be known by the hearers. Furthermore, he heightens this potential threat to face by implying that, as this policy is clear to him (*pour moi c'était clair*), it ought to be clear to all those present. He terminates the entire exchange with the abrupt *point final*, effectively stopping any further discussion on this topic.

In this extract there are four occurrences of *on* each of which arguably could allow a number of different interpretations.

Let us first examine the utterance *on fai... c'était nous qui faisons faire des photos par notre service photos*. This is a clear instance of self-repair where there is an identifiable pause before Dousson selects the pronoun *nous* (as opposed to other possible personal pronouns such as *moi, toi, vous, lui, elle, eux, elles*), to replace *on*. It seems to us that this choice responds more to a desire to be explicit and to structure the propositional content of the message (by highlighting the agent) than to any possible considerations of politeness. In this case the shift from *on* to *nous* is determined by the use of the cleft structure '*c'est...qui/e*' (see 4.2.1): the effect is to appeal to the 'corporate we' of *Lyon Matin*.

Dousson's use of [ON] for reminders has already been examined in 5.3.2 and here again there is little doubt that the referent of *on* in *donc on avait dit qu'on envoyait un photographe* is Dousson himself. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Dousson further implies that it is not purely an instruction of his own when he says *pour moi c'était clair*, separating himself from the decision itself (and implying that if it was clear to him then it should be clear to anyone else).

If we look at the fourth occurrence of *on* (*on va le repréciser cette semaine*), it is interesting to see how it can be interpreted either as self-reference (*je* = Dousson), hearer-reference (*vous* = Luc and Joceline) as well as the corporate 'we' of *Lyon Matin*.

If we interpret this *on* as self-reference (*on* = Dousson), then Dousson is using a 'performative hedge' (see 4.1.5) insofar as he states what he intends to do i.e. spell the policy out and then does so. As we saw in 4.1.5, performatives act as strengtheners providing that the speaker fulfils the required felicity conditions to carry them out: in this case, Dousson, as editor and chair fulfils these conditions. The use of *on*, implying that he speaks for *Lyon Matin*, can add further authority to this utterance.

If, however, we interpret this use of *on* as hearer/third person reference (*on* = *vous/ils* = Luc and Joceline), Dousson could be telling the meeting that Luc and Joceline are to reconfirm policy to Christian Renaud and Zoras that evening (third person reference) and at the same time be prefacing an instruction (*vous leur dites*) to them to do precisely that (hearer reference). In this case, *on* could be interpreted in a variety of ways including the patronising and even insulting, parent-to small child 'now let's put our shoes on' (which is stylistically in line with Dousson's manner of spelling out policy in a very simple fashion but is an implausible interpretation given the high level of threat that this would pose to the face of the hearers precisely by implying their lack of power and status).

A third interpretation of *on*, following on from the above, would be that Dousson is using *on* to refer to the corporate identity of *Lyon Matin* and using this authority to call upon the good offices of Luc and Joceline to specify policy to Christian Renaud and Zoras. This interpretation would allow the performative to serve as an attenuator for the face-threatening command to Luc and Joceline by giving a compelling reason and authority for carrying out the task. Furthermore, this interpretation allows participants to support policy as outlined by Dousson insofar as they are part of *Lyon Matin*.

It can be seen that there are a number of interpretations which could explain this use of *on*, the most charitable of which is that *on* is used to refer to *Lyon Matin*. However, given the face-threatening acts which accumulate in this turn, this interpretation appears a thin disguise for what is more easily interpreted as a sustained display of personal power by the editor. Indeed, the effectiveness of Dousson's turn can be seen in the fact that this policy is not further challenged and the discussion goes on to another issue.

As in the previous example, we have seen how the indeterminate pronoun [ON] can be exploited by a speaker to assert authority for him or herself by appealing to institutional power and to protect the face of the speaker from challenge.

5.3.4 Example 4

One interpretation of the following extract is that Colette, a journalist, is complaining because she fears that a certain article has not been published due to the incompetence of someone present:

- (36) (C) en quartiers samedi il y a eu des problèmes... il y a les trois manifestations de quartier qui n'ont pas bien sûr vu... [] les manifestations patronnées par Lyon Matin
on (1) n'a pas vu les papiers je pense pas qu'ils aient été apportés moi je suis partie à huit heures et demie ils

n'étaient toujours pas là ils n'étaient pas dans le journal d'hier [] alors je ne sais pas ce qui s'est passé

She returns to the same topic shortly afterwards:

- (37) (C) ...mais les photos ont été faites vous avez les photos là-bas mais il n'y a pas de papiers
- (X) mais là sur les fêtes de la St Jean et du Podium Europe 1
- (C) non les fêtes de la St Jean c'est Luc qui les a faites et ça on (2) l'a eu celui-là

Colette, in raising this issue and implicitly apportioning blame, is committing a FTA towards the person or persons responsible for failing to ensure the publication of this article. In her first turn, in each instance where she refers to the problem, she deletes the agent (*les trois manifestations de quartier qui n'ont pas bien sûr vu..., je pense pas qu'ils aient été apportés, ils n'étaient toujours pas là, ils n'étaient pas dans le journal d'hier*). Thus the focus is shifted onto the *manifestations de quartier* and the missing articles and away from the individual(s) responsible for ensuring their publication. When she pursues the issue of missing articles in the second extract she continues to maintain the focus on the articles and not the agent (*les photos ont été faites, il n'y a pas de papiers*). This provides a striking contrast with her reference to articles which have been published where she highlights the name of the journalist whose article it is by using the emphatic structure *c'est X qui*:

c'est Luc qui les a faites. This appears to be a convincing example of what Brown and Levinson (1987:211) call going 'off-record' (1.2.3). What at one level appear to be statements of fact need to be interpreted in light of their relevance to the discussion. One interpretation could be that (a) Colette must be raising the issue because it is a problem; (b) there must be someone responsible for this problem; (c) this problem does not affect certain people (Luc) but it does affect her; (d) therefore someone must be capable of doing the job but unwilling to do it for her. Such an interpretation is extremely threatening to the face of the individual or individuals responsible for this state of affairs and if this interpretation accounts for the implications to be drawn from her utterances it also accounts for the forms she has used to express them.

So, within a context of what appears to be deliberate agent deletion, it is interesting to examine Colette's use of [ON]. Knowledge of Colette's role and status as a relatively powerless journalist and knowledge of her past actions (she remained at *Lyon Matin* until eight-thirty on Saturday) orient interpretation of her first use of [ON] strongly towards that of self-reference. Were Colette to use the more determinate pronoun [JE], she might run the risk of having her complaint discounted on account of her lack of status within the meeting. Thus the potential of

[ON] to enable a speaker to imply that a group has suffered, whether this be other journalists in addition to Colette or even *Lyon Matin* itself, adds weight to her position as well as protecting her against potential challenge.

5.3.5 Example 5

The following extract is taken from a discussion where Yves has proposed that he should carry out an inquiry into an incident where a local head teacher has required one of his members of staff to visit a psychiatrist. The meeting is growing more relaxed and this suggestion is not being taken altogether seriously. Dousson jocularly suggests that it is Yves who should visit the psychiatrist and suggests they talk about the matter later. However, Yves needs a decision immediately as the teacher is coming to see him later:

- (38) (Y) ...il vient cet après-midi à trois heures et demie
- (D) comment tu as dit... en short en foulard... signe distinctif
- (B) maillot de bain
- (Y) mais c'est un type remarquable à part ça (à part ça quoi?) franchement mais quand on discute avec lui non mais quand on oublie sa physionomie son aspect quand on se montre tolérant il a un discours des plus intéressants

Yves prefaces his second turn with *mais*, indicating a contrary view and then tries to bring the discussion back to more serious ground. We have already seen (5.1.3) that the interpretation of *on* in Yves' second turn is syntactically weighted towards a generic interpretation on account of the implicative construction *quand...* and contextually towards a specific interpretation, in this instance that of self-reference ([JE]) (because we know that Yves has already talked with the teacher).

Pragmatically this utterance would fall within what Laberge and Sankoff call 'situational insertion' (1980:280). They argue that:

...it is fairly clear that the "indefinite agent" serves as a rather transparent guise for the speaker's own experience and opinions. There is clearly more going on here than the simple avoidance of "I" due to the politeness or "refinement" that the classic French grammarians have attributed to the seventeenth century nobility (1980:281).

They go on to assert:

The discursive effect of inserting an unspecified agent into a hypothetical situation seems to function to elevate (the) statement to the plane of conventional wisdom - thereby, perhaps, rendering it more difficult to challenge.

Thus their analysis falls squarely within one interpretation offered by politeness theory: that the use of a distancing device, such as the use of [ON] in this instance, functions as a face-protection strategy against

a possible challenge from a hearer, by elevating a 'statement to the plane of conventional wisdom'. For if Yves, in the example above, had used the equivalent, in terms of genericity, of [TU] (see 4.3.2 (ii)), this pronoun would not have enabled him to make a serious point, that is that 'anyone' who talked to this teacher would find him of interest. Instead [TU] could easily be interpreted as [JE], in this case, Yves himself. As the meeting is not taking Yves seriously at this point in the meeting, his experience could easily be discounted. By selecting *on*, Yves is able to draw on authority for his experience both at a generic level and also at a specific level where this use of *on* could be interpreted as that of the 'corporate we' and where Yves would be speaking as a representative of the best interests of the newspaper. This contrasts with the following example taken from a complaint by one of the photographers that too many people are taking photographs for the paper:

(39) (P) oui mais à la prise de vue à ce moment-là tu as deux gars
qui travaillent...

Here, insofar as the complaint is directed at Dousson (who is not involved in taking photographs), the predominant value of [TU] is the generic overlaid by the specific value of self-reference insofar as the speaker is talking from personal experience. It was argued earlier (4.3) that

one of the functions of [VOUS] in such circumstances was as an appeal to solidarity. If the photographer had chosen the generic 'equivalent' [ON] (*oui mais à la prise de vue à ce moment-là on a deux gars...*), not only would this appeal to solidarity be lost but also the specific value of the 'corporate we' whereby the speaker is able to speak in the best interests of the institution and draw authority from it would be absent. However, given his lack of authority within the meeting it is possible that, were he to use [ON], this pronoun could be interpreted only in the restrictively specific sense of 'we the photographers' because hearers would not attribute the speaker sufficient authority to be speaking on behalf of the newspaper.

These examples appear to us to be further evidence that [TU] and [ON] are not necessarily discursive equivalents in contexts of genericity.

5.3.6 Example 6

In the following extract there is a further instance of 'disagreement'. This extract has already been discussed in 5.1.2 where it was argued that both a specific and a generic value of *on* are present in the utterance:

(40) (W) *on* (1) fait toujours priorité au cinéma mais

(D) le cinéma c'est le grand public c'est le mercredi les
films changent le mercredi on va pas changer nous

(W) oui je ne dis pas le contraire mais quand on (2) a une
pièce d'Ionesco on (2) passe après

The woman journalist is openly challenging a policy decision in the utterance containing *on* (1). Insofar as she is challenging this decision, she implies that she is not or does not want to be included in the referent of *on*. Our knowledge of participant roles (that is that final decisions on policy are taken by Dousson) allows one interpretation of this use of *on* to be that of 'you' addressed to Dousson. However, the fact that *on* can also potentially include the speaker, having as its referent the 'corporate we' of *Lyon Matin* of which the speaker herself is part, allows her to mitigate the threat to face caused by this challenge. Furthermore, the generic value of *on* as suggested by the adverb *toujours* (see 5.1.2) further mitigates her challenge insofar as it contains the suggestion that this decision is a statement of a general rule or principle. Thus these two further values of *on* present in the conversation could work to mask the threat contained in the implied use of *on* = 'you, Dousson'.

Later, in her response to Dousson's categorical refusal to modify that policy, she presents what has possibly been

her personal experience (insofar as she refers to a specific incident) in what can also be read in generic terms (because of the implicative construction) *quand on a une pièce d'Ionesco on passe après*. Were she to use the pronouns [JE] or [TU/VOUS] she could lay herself open to challenge for, as she has little power in terms of the meeting, her argument would carry little weight. Here the use of [ON] allows her to add force to her argument by stating it as a general rule (generic [ON]) and also by implying that this is the experience of a wider group of people (specific [ON]). She is also able to protect her face for if her view is challenged it is conventional wisdom or the experience of a group which is attacked rather than her personal experience.

5.3.7 Example 7

In the following extract the journalist Guillot is committing the FTA of implicitly criticising an (unnamed) individual responsible for an error of judgement, that is, for having committed the newspaper to sell records on behalf of a record shop:

- (41) (G) ah non alors là on va encore revenir à un sujet il faut savoir qui s'occupe de quoi... *on* (1) s'est engueulé il y a trois mois on s'est engueulé parce que *il y a quelqu'un de la maison* qui avait accepté de donner 50 60 70 places pour la joyeuse gambade de Neuville sur Saône je ne sais quoi à la une... on avait gueulé comme des veaux ce jour-là... on ne peut plus en faire ne pas autoriser de distribution des places à moins de 100 places... je me suis battu Jacquotte

200 places... on a dû renégocier et en même temps je découvre qu'on (2) distribue des disques... moi la maison des disques quand ils m'appellent je leur dis vos disques vous les gardez... alors il faudrait une unité et ça c'est pour les spectacles pour les faits divers...

Guillot uses *on* (1) to refer to the participants in a row over the same issue three months previously. Knowledge of past actions should provide a referent for this pronoun. The point at issue in this row was that an unnamed individual (*quelqu'un de la maison*) had agreed to take on the sale of a small number of tickets for a concert, apparently against *Lyon Matin* policy. While Guillot was fighting for an increase in the number of tickets he discovered that someone (*on*) was also distributing records, another action against agreed policy.

Of course Guillot could be using the indefinite *quelqu'un* and the indeterminate pronoun *on* because he feels that the identity of this/these individual(s) is less relevant than the principle at issue. However, we know that the first culprit *quelqu'un* is a member of *Lyon Matin* and that in principle all members of *Lyon Matin* are present at the meeting (and if they are not, that many of those present would know the name of the individual in question).

Therefore he would seem to be using *quelqu'un* to avoid, or to go on record as avoiding making a direct accusation (a FTA). His use of *on* cannot include the speaker insofar as Guillot says *je découvre qu'on*; the fact that it is he who

has discovered this makes it unlikely that he is also the culprit. As the referent of *on* is also probably at the meeting (and may indeed be the same person as *quelqu'un*) it is likely that Guillot has exploited the pronoun [ON] to make an indirect accusation. The use of [ON] here protects both his face and that of the accused insofar as it allows the implicature that Guillot does not find the identity of the transgressor relevant.

5.3.8 Example 8

Brown and Levinson (1987:132) are mainly concerned with the question form insofar as it can be used as a conventional hedge on the illocutionary force of a FTA through, for example, rhetorical questions as in a request such as 'Can you pass the salt?'. However, questions can also be used for their conventional purpose, that is to elicit information. As such a question is potentially face-threatening in two respects: it requires the hearer to answer; and it requires to be followed by a preferred response (see 1.3.1). Brown and Levinson (1987:114) look at ways speakers can preface dispreferred responses to a question to pay attention to the face of their interlocutor, evidence in itself of the face-threatening potential of the question. In our data there were 24 questions of which 14 were asked by Dousson. In 14 of these there was no direct reference to participants in the

communicative event. For example, when Dousson invites participants to speak, he uses forms such as:

(42) (D) est-ce qu'il y a des choses à dire?

(43) (D) autre chose... rien à dire?

These forms, as we shall see in 5.6, by avoiding any reference to participants, do not require any particular individual to answer. If a participant chooses to speak, the fact of speaking constitutes in itself a preferred response, given that the purpose of Dousson's utterances is to allow participants to raise issues. Of the remaining 10 utterances only 7 included any pronominal reference to speaker or hearer of which 6, all spoken by Dousson, used [TU]. A further three utterances included the pronoun [ON]. In one of these it is possible that considerations of politeness motivated the choice of [ON].

One of the first issues which arise in the meeting concerns the newspaper's coverage of festivities in different local districts. Luc briefly summarises events in the 8th district and then Dousson asks about the 9th.

(44) (D) *est-ce qu'on est paré pour le neuvième?* (oui) parce que moi ça m'inquiète un peu plus parce que autant le huitième me paraissait bien cadré autant pour le neuvième qui commence ce soir euh (pause)

(L) tout est fonction du choix des places

Our knowledge of Dousson's role as editor tells us that he cannot possibly be personally responsible for carrying out preparations for the ninth district. In fact, the remarks he makes to justify asking this question appear to show his supervisory function. Thus our knowledge of participant roles tells us in this instance that *on* is either used to refer to *Lyon Matin* generally, (of which he is part) or to refer to those, present or otherwise, who are responsible for this action. So why does Dousson use the indeterminate pronoun [ON] with its strong specific value of 'we' inclusive and its suggestion of the corporate *Lyon Matin* when he could more explicitly have used the pronoun for 'you' or for 'they'?

The function of the question highlighted above is ambiguous. Dousson could be asking whether preparations have been made for the 9th district purely for information either only for himself or to inform the meeting as a whole; alternatively he could be making an implicit reminder/suggestion/request/order that if they have not been made they ought to be; there may even be the further implication that there is more to 'being prepared' than they had previously thought. However, regardless of what the motivation behind the question may be, the act itself is *potentially* face-threatening. Even if the question is a simple request for information, there is always the possibility that the addressee will provide a dispreferred

response (here a negative response) (see 1.3.1). Thus there is the danger of threat both to the speaker's and to the hearer's face: to the hearer for having been placed in the position of having to provide a dispreferred response, in this case publicly; and to the speaker for receiving a dispreferred response and additionally for having placed the addressee in such a position.

That there is an element of threat to face in this instance seems borne out firstly by the fact that Dousson goes on to give reasons to justify asking this question, and secondly by the fact that Luc does not give a direct answer to the question.

So could the use of *on* in this utterance have been prompted by motivations of politeness? If we take the value of *on* as 'we' = [+ speaker] [+ hearer] as opposed to the larger organisation of which speaker and hearer form part [+ speaker] [+ hearer] [+ third person], then the utterance is curious as a straightforward request for information. For, it seems reasonable to assume that a speaker knows whether he or she is in fact prepared. If the value of *on* is [- speaker] [+ hearer], then an alternative formulation would be '*Est-ce que tu es/vous êtes préparé(s)?*'. This however would be maximally face-threatening if the addressee(s) was/were unable to give a

positive (preferred) response for the reasons outlined above.

By using [ON] with its strong implication that it includes the speaker and yet its potential also for excluding the speaker, Dousson is able to direct a question at an addressee ([ON] = [VOUS]) while at the same time assuming some of the responsibility for the answer ([ON] = [NOUS]) (making the challenger part of the challenged). Thus he can appeal implicitly to the corporate status of the newspaper ([ON] = *Lyon Matin*) to put this question implying 'Are we (the newspaper) jointly prepared?'.

While there are very few occurrences of [ON] with questions in our data, it would be of interest to investigate whether this, along with other linguistic resources which do not in themselves implicate speakers or hearers, is a widely used resource in asking questions in meetings.

5.3.9 Concluding remarks

Sections 5.3.1 to 5.3.8 sought to illustrate how speakers can exploit the indeterminacy offered by the pronoun *on* for the purposes of face protection. The relative power, status and role within the organisation *Lyon Matin* and the meeting itself proved to be important factors in the

interpretation of the pronoun [ON]. In this particular meeting, the potential of [ON] to refer to the 'corporate we' of *Lyon Matin* was particularly useful. A powerful speaker could appeal to the power of the institution to dissociate himself personally from a FTA, to give himself authority for a FTA and to protect his own face against challenge (5.3.1-3): on the one hand by deflecting the challenge away from himself onto the newspaper and on the other by making the hearers, as consulted members of the newspaper, part of the challenged. He was also able to use this resource in directing questions (5.3.8), in themselves potentially face-threatening, at his colleagues. Less powerful speakers (5.3.6) could also draw on the 'corporate we' afforded by [ON] to mitigate the threat of complaints directed at the editor. Another value potentially present is that of the indefinite unidentified agent, giving the linguistic implicature that the identity of the agent is irrelevant. Speakers can exploit this value (5.3.7) to make FTAs while at the same time paying attention to the face of the accused by ensuring that their accusations are indirect. Less powerful speakers were also able to draw on the generic value of [ON] (5.3.5) to give weight to accounts of personal experience; indeed it was argued that the perceived power of a speaker was a factor which should be taken into account in assessing the discursive effects of the generic 'equivalents' [ON] and [TU/VOUS].

5.4 Impersonals

In section 4.0 the inclusion of the category of impersonals in addition to those of personal pronouns was mentioned. In this category, the agent of a given action is, in effect, deleted through devices such as the use of impersonal constructions (e.g. *il faut*), passivisation (*ça a été confirmé*) and nominalisation (*quelqu'un*). These devices have also been referred to in the analysis of pronominal data so far, in particular in 5.3. It has been suggested that these devices, being maximally indeterminate, can provide a further powerful resource for speakers who wish to employ indirectness as a strategy.

The aim of this section is to examine some uses of impersonals in our data where indirectness and probably politeness are at issue.

5.3.5 contained an examination of the use of [ON] for self-reference by Yves who recounts an incident where a teacher at a local school has been required by his headteacher to visit a psychiatrist. After introducing this topic, Yves makes a case for writing an article about it. He couches his request in impersonals:

(43) (Y) *je pense qu'il faut quand-même faire une enquête...*

(46) (Y) *il y a tout un dossier à faire...*

(47) (Y) *ça merite d'ecrire un papier très très curieux...*

There is little doubt that it is Yves himself who wishes to write this article: we know that his role is that of a journalist; knowledge of past actions tells us that he has done the preliminary work for it; when Dousson replies he refers to Yves' choice of articles and suggests they meet to discuss it. So why has Yves chosen to impersonalise his request? One explanation could be that a request is potentially face-threatening to both speaker and hearer. In the event of a dispreferred response (in this case a refusal) there would be a threat to Dousson's positive face insofar as he would be seen as not caring about Yves' wants or feelings and a threat to Yves' positive face insofar as his needs are not being met. This threat to face still exists with the use of impersonals but yet it is mitigated. For if Yves were to suggest that he personally should write the article a refusal might bring into question Yves' capacity for doing so as well as the validity of the proposal. The use of impersonals means that it is only the idea of engaging in an activity (writing an article) which is at issue and not the person and personal capacities of the potential writer, in this case Yves.

In this way, impersonals can be a face-saving resource for those who do not have the power to influence proceedings

except by suggestion and request. The following are suggestions/requests (all potentially FTAs) by Luc, two of the photographers and Guillot:

- (48) (L) *là je crois qu'il faudrait donc...*
- (49) (P3) *il faudrait aller peut-être...*
- (50) (P1) *est-ce qu'il ne serait pas possible de toujours...*
- (51) (G) *il faudra que quelqu'un prenne en charge...*
- (52) (G) *il faudra pas manquer les variétés*

It is interesting to note that the first two of these suggestions are further mitigated by the use of the conditional tense and by hedges (*là, je crois que, peut-être*). Guillot also mitigates threat to face by the use of the future tense. Request (50), the most indirect of all, comes from an individual who wields very little power within the group.

We have also already looked (5.3.1) at Dousson's use of [ON] in refusing Guillot's request for extra staffing. We know that Dousson is ultimately responsible for staff allocation and yet he chooses to couch his refusal in the following terms:

- (53) (D) *je crois hélas qu'il y en aura pas d'affecté spécifiquement aux faits divers*

The choice of the impersonal here means that Dousson can shift the focus away from the decision (which must be taken by an agent, himself) to the outcome of any decision thus extricating himself from the decision-making process.

Dousson also resorts to the use of impersonals in what, given his power, status and discourse role, can only be interpreted as direct instructions to several of those present:

- (54) (D) *oui mais à ce moment-là il suffit de le dire et de le prévoir...*
- (55) (D) *il suffit de le dire de dire ça fait...*
- (56) (D) *là Christine il faudrait que vous commenciez à noter...*

Here the force of the impersonals is to shift the source of the directive from Dousson himself to a neutral ground where the command can be interpreted as a general rule (Brown and Levinson 1987:206-7). In example (56), the impersonal, further mitigated by the conditional tense, serves as a hedge on what is indeed a face-threatening act: an instruction by Dousson to a named individual to carry out a specified act.

That hearers can and do interpret these impersonals as being used as instructions and as having a specific

referent can be seen in the following extract which provides a wider co-text for extract (54):

(57) (D) oui mais à ce moment-là *il suffit de le dire et de le prévoir* parce que je suis navré aussi c'est une organisation interne on reçoit le paquet de papiers le soir mais j'avoue j'ai le temps ou j'ai pas le temps de les regarder et je les transpose au secrétariat

(W) ça veut dire que *je* regarde les maquettes

(D) ça veut dire aussi que *vous* les lisez...

The woman journalist has interpreted Dousson's instruction (*il suffit de le dire et de le prévoir*) as referring directly to her and he confirms this interpretation in the final utterance.

However, speakers may also be aware of the fact that impersonals can be used to protect a speaker's face from challenge and may be prepared to challenge some of the implications made available by the use of this degree of indeterminacy. For example, Dousson reacts strongly to the criticism implicit in Jean-Pierre's turn:

(58) (JP) pour en finir avec les spectacles... la la priorité des musiques resterait quand-même à définir... moi je trouve qu'on a assez mal couvert... c'est peut-être une part d'autocritique... la journée de la musique mais enfin de toute façon on était le lendemain bloqué par une pagination complètement réduite... et ça serait quand-même c'est techniquement techniquement incontournable mais la question qui avait été posée de trouver quelqu'un pour faire la musique en gros...reste à poser...

(D) mais non parce qu'*on* avait dit qu'il fallait trouver quelqu'un que vous vous en occupiez *on* attend toujours

In this utterance, Jean-Pierre (see also 5.1.8) makes an extremely tentative criticism about the priority given to music in *Lyon Matin*, about coverage of a recent musical event (where he includes himself amongst the blameworthy) and about the fact that they still do not have another member of staff. His reference to those who have been/ought to have been responsible for certain actions is extremely indirect. Indeed, a main linguistic strategy he uses is that of agent-deletion. For example, he omits any reference to the person responsible for defining the priority to be given to music when he says *la priorité des musiques resterait quand-même à définir*. It is up to the hearer to interpret this bald declaration on the basis of extralinguistic contextual information (see 5.2). However, as we have seen, it is Dousson's job to establish priorities; thus he is a potential referent.

5.1.4) showed how Jean-Pierre's repair (*c'est peut-être une part d'autocritique*) was possibly directed at the face-threatening potential of [ON]: for as well as potentially including the speaker, [ON] can be used for speaker-exclusion. It was argued that it was possible that Jean-Pierre was aware that his use of [ON] have been interpreted as an attempt to avoid blame personally and that this might have been what prompted him to place on record his inclusion within the referent of [ON].

he then goes on to attribute blame for this poor coverage to a technical constraint, i.e. that on a particular day not enough space was (made) available for music coverage (*on était le lendemain bloqué par une pagination complètement réduite*). Here again reference to the agent responsible for making space available is omitted and reference to those who have suffered from this failure to act is by the indeterminate pronoun [ON]. Only knowledge of who exactly was affected can give a precise referent. If it is, as one might suspect, only Jean-Pierre himself, being the only music reporter on *Lyon Matin* staff, then the use of [ON] could be motivated by an attempt to add weight to his complaint by implying that a number of individuals, or even *Lyon Matin* itself, rather than he alone were affected.

Jean-Pierre then changes the focus of his attack from a lack of space to a lack of personnel (*la question qui avait été posée de trouver quelqu'un pour faire la musique*). By concluding that the issue still needs to be solved (*la question.....reste à poser*), he implies that although a solution to the problem had been talked about (engaging another journalist to cover music) nothing had been done. Interestingly here again he deletes all reference to agent by using the distancing device of passivisation (*la question qui avait été posée*). There is little doubt that the person who raised this issue was

either Jean-Pierre himself or Dousson given his capacity as editor (here again, knowledge of past actions can help identify a referent): indeed context tells us that it must be someone present at the meeting. So, why should Jean-Pierre prefer to omit all reference to an agent rather than use the pronoun [ON] or even [JE] [NOUS] [TU] or [VOUS]?

If Jean-Pierre's implied agent is Dousson, to use the pronoun [TU]/[VOUS] could be seen as a challenge to Dousson's authority: Dousson would have been seen to have made a promise and then to have broken it. In any case, given that the issue was raised and no solution has been found, to identify the relevant individual might be interpreted as an accusation of failure.

What can be said about Jean-Pierre's intervention is that he is complaining about a state of affairs and reminding Dousson/the meeting of a prior agreement to solve the problem. The fact that he has chosen to raise the problem implies that Jean-Pierre does not believe that the solution is in his own hands.

However, what he says is indirect in the extreme and would require a close knowledge of both past events, status and roles and current motivations of the speaker in order to approach an interpretation of it. Dousson, as addressee,

does interpret it so we shall examine below how he deals with these underlying implications.

In Dousson's reply to Jean-Pierre ((D) *mais non parce (...) qu'on avait dit qu'il fallait trouver quelqu'un que vous vous en occupiez on attend toujours*), it is evident that he has responded to some of the unspoken implications (intentional or otherwise) and would appear to interpret these as accusations.

He begins his turn with a rejection (*mais non*) apparently in response to the implication of Jean-Pierre's final statement, i.e. that the whole issue needs raised again.

He then agrees that the decision had indeed been taken to employ someone. Where Jean-Pierre had used the agent-deleting device of the passive (*la question qui avait été posée*), Dousson is more specific using the indeterminate pronoun *on* in *on avait dit*. Whether this *on* is used to mean 'we' (here most probably *Lyon Matin*), or is, as we have seen previously, an instance of self-reference, Dousson thus establishes a point of reference for the responsibility for this decision. He is then able to reject the conversational inference that the individual(s) who agreed to this decision was/were also responsible for its implementation and imputes the responsibility directly to Jean-Pierre (*que vous vous en occupiez*).

Thus Dousson provides referents (one albeit more determinate than the other) to what had remained highly ambiguous in Jean-Pierre's intervention. By the use of the direct *vous*, therefore, he counterattacks by implying that it is Jean-Pierre who is, despite expectations, to blame for not having solved the problem (*on attend toujours*). Whether the interpretation of [ON] = [JE] or [ON] = [NOUS] i.e. those of us here, the implication remains that it is Jean-Pierre who is to blame insofar as he is guilty of forcing the individual/group of individuals referred to by [ON] to wait for a solution.

Dousson's two uses of [ON] can command a variety of interpretations, all specific in nature. *On* (1) could refer to Dousson as editor in his capacity as decision-maker (self-reference), to Dousson and Jean-Pierre together, or to the meeting (and thereby *Lyon Matin* policy). Nor do the two referents of *on* have to be the same. *On* (2) could have all of these three references although it is less probable that it is used to refer to Dousson and Jean-Pierre together (given the opposition between [VOUS] and [ON]). Thus interpretations ranging from the more to the less charitable are available.

In these examples, we have seen that a variety of impersonal devices can allow individuals to engage in FTAs and at the same time protect their own faces and those of

their hearers. We have also seen how contextual knowledge allows individuals to interpret these impersonals, and ultimately to challenge the FTAs that these devices are designed to cover.

5.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was primarily to investigate the potential of the indeterminate pronoun [ON] as a resource for politeness strategies. It was seen (2.3.1) how the pronoun does not, in itself, encode any speaker or hearer reference and therefore how its interpretation is wholly dependent on contextual factors. Given its wide range of potential reference ([+ specific] [+ generic] [+ speaker] [+ hearer] [+ third person] [+ singular] [+ plural] [+ feminine] [+ masculine]), it should indeed be a productive resource for linguistic indirectness insofar as the hearer has to assign a referent to a given use of [ON] on the basis of assumptions, whether these are connected to the linguistic or extra-linguistic context.

We examined elements of the linguistic context (5.1) and saw that, while only on rare occasions did these supply a referent for a given use of a pronoun, they could orient towards or eliminate certain potential values of the pronoun: for example, co-reference (5.1.1) (more properly

a pragmatic rather than linguistic category) could restrict potential reference to a more determinate pronoun; certain lexical and syntactic indicators (5.1.2-3) could eliminate altogether a generic interpretation or orient towards one; and the discourse indicator of repair (5.1.4), could be used by speakers to eliminate potential implicatures of the pronoun. Repairs, and even more so, requests for clarification were relatively uncommon in the corpus.

Extra-linguistic indicators (5.2) proved considerably more useful in orienting towards a given interpretation of [ON]. In particular, knowledge of past actions (5.2.1) of participants and a knowledge of their roles (both social and discourse) and status (5.2.2) could give a strong indication of the potential referent of [ON]. Indeed knowledge of roles and status correlated closely with the variables of Power and Distance identified by Brown and Levinson as being crucial determinants of the use of linguistic politeness.

Taken together, these contextual indicators, while often pointing to a probable referent, did not eliminate ambiguity. They merely provided a working assumption of a referent which could be modified as the conversation progressed. However, in a number of cases, there were conflicting interpretations, for example, where a

linguistic structure suggested a generic referent but where knowledge of participants' actions, status and roles suggested a specific, indentifiable individual. The investigation of a number of such cases (5.3) which occurred in face-threatening situations, showed how a knowledge of politeness strategies could be a further indicator in enabling a hearer to assign a referent to [ON]. More importantly, it showed how speakers were able to use [ON], as a face-protecting device, to refer to themselves and others in interaction.

While many speakers were, on the basis of contextual knowledge, using [ON] for speaker and hearer reference (reference which is maximally face-threatening in a situation of conflict), other significant values were simultaneously present in the conversation. One important value of [ON] in this particular corpus was that of the 'corporate we', in this case of the newspaper *Lyon Matin*. Speakers could thus exploit the potential of the pronoun [ON] (e.g. 5.2.1, 5.2.2) to refer to 'we at *Lyon Matin*' and, thereby, draw on the implied authority of the newspaper to carry out such FTAs as refusals to cooperate, complaints, reminders and instructions. The implication that the FTAs were being carried out on behalf of the newspaper or that it was the newspaper, and not an individual who was affected by a FTA, rendered such FTAs difficult to challenge: a challenger would be seen to be

attacking an institution rather than an individual and furthermore an institution of which he or she is part and is seen to represent.

Another important value of [ON] is that of the generic 'anyone': this can allow a speaker to protect his or her face or that of an interlocutor when making a FTA (e.g. 5.3.5, 5.3.7). Where a generic interpretation is possible, a FTA can be interpreted as a general rule or principle and can be challenged at that level rather than at the more personal level of speaker and hearer. The indefinite value of [ON] could also be exploited by a speaker to make a FTA and at the same time suggest that the identity of the threatened individual is not relevant, thereby protecting the face of both speaker and hearer.

Impersonalisation (5.4) provides a similar resource to that offered by the generic or indefinite value of [ON], that is it allows speakers and hearers to be distanced from a given proposition: any challenge is thus directed against the proposition rather than the individuals involved.

Speakers appear to have little difficulty in drawing interpretations from on and the more indeterminate impersonals and, where relevant, can go on record and challenge the assumptions which they feel lie behind their use. However, this was not generally the case in this

corpus and the large number of occurrences of on appeared to create an interactional space for speakers and hearers, where each could use and interpret on in her or his own way, within the developing context of the meeting.

CHAPTER 6 ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL PRONOMINAL REFERENCE IN A CORPUS OF NATURALLY-OCCURRING SPOKEN SPANISH

6.0 Introduction

In the analysis of the French data (Chapters 4 and 5), politeness theory proved a useful tool in providing insight into questions of interpretation of personal reference and, particularly, in the case of the indeterminate pronoun *on*, the potential value to both speaker and hearer of keeping alive a multiplicity of simultaneous values in the interest of paying attention to face. However, for a number of reasons, the investigation of the Spanish data does not seek to replicate that of French corpus. Such an approach would involve considerable repetition and would not address the issues in this area which are specific to the Spanish language alone. Furthermore, while the two sets of data are broadly equivalent, there are fundamental differences in terms of roles (mainly discourse roles) and status (see Chapter 3). In this chapter therefore, the aim will be, on the one hand, to investigate the potential of a different pronominal system, in this case the peninsular Spanish one, to enable a speaker to pay attention to face and on the other, to consider, from the perspective of politeness theory, one issue of particular concern to Spanish

grammarians: the presence and absence of personal pronominal reference.

In the case of Spanish, unlike French, pronominal usage has long been perceived as a problematic area both in terms of the grammar of the language for the native speaker (see for example, María Moliner, 1988) and in terms of the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language (Gili y Gaya, 1961, Puleo García & Sanz Hernández, 1989, Alvarez Martínez, 1989, etc.). It was already noted (2.3.2) that Spanish does not require the presence of a subject personal pronoun and that, when it occurs, it may either precede or succeed the verb. Indeed, in the majority of cases, the pronoun is absent (Enríquez 1984:122). Another area of enquiry for scholars has been that of defining which pronouns belong to the personal pronominal paradigm. The two *V* pronouns are not derived from within the pronominal system itself but rather are contractions of honorifics. Furthermore, the impersonal clitic *se*, which can be used for personal pronominal reference, fulfills, in fact, four main grammatical functions (Molina Redondo (1974), etc.). Statistical surveys (1) have been carried out into pronominal use based on large scale corpora recorded in Madrid and in many capitals in Latin America. Given the breadth of focus on this general issue within Spanish linguistics, the intention of this chapter is to investigate the

contribution that politeness theory might make to the area of personal pronominal reference in Spanish. This chapter will therefore review some of the main theoretical issues in Spanish pronominal reference and then use this framework in conjunction with the approach adopted in Chapters 4 and 5 to analyse, in context, occurrences within the data.

The data on which this study will be based is described in 3.2.2 - 3.2.5 and will be analysed qualitatively.

6.1 Presence or absence of the pronoun

While many early studies of the pronoun focussed on the absence of the personal pronoun, Gili y Gaya (1961:228) suggests that it is inappropriate to talk about its absence (in the case of first and second persons) but rather its presence. He speculates about motives for the inclusion of the pronoun saying vaguely that they are '*variadísimos y a veces borrosos o poco perceptibles*' (extremely varied and on occasions blurred or barely perceptible) and even goes as far as to state that pronouns are '*redundantes*' as in the case of the pleonastic '*a mí me parece*'.

The principal reasons advanced for the presence of the pronoun are to do with disambiguation and emphasis or

contrast. Enriquez (1984) and Bentivoglio (1987) suggest that the type of verb is also an important consideration and Silva-Corvalan (1982) and Contreras (1976) investigate the notion of given and new information. In this section, we shall briefly review these categories.

6.1.1. Disambiguation

While the person of a verb is, for the most part, encoded in the verbal ending, there remains, nonetheless, a certain degree of systemic ambiguity. Not only is the verb ending for the third person the same as that for the V form, but in many verbs in certain tenses and moods there is no differentiation between the first and third person singular. For example:

(a) viene (él, ella, Vd.) a las dos

(b) jugaba (yo, él, ella, Vd.) bien

Gili y Gaya (1961:228) considers this systemic ambiguity grounds for increased use of the third person pronoun when the context does not make the referent absolutely clear and when the speaker wishes to preclude a false interpretation. Indeed The Spanish Academy had already pronounced on this matter in 1931 when they wrote:

en los tiempos en que la primera persona es igual que la tercera... deberá expresarse el sujeto siempre que su omisión puede originar duda

in those tenses where the first person is the same as the third...the subject should be expressed whenever its omission may give rise to doubt

Carbonero (1982:55), in his study of Sevillian Spanish, has sought evidence for the disambiguating function of the personal pronoun in what he argues to be a high frequency of use in the Andalusian variety of Spanish. He points to phonological factors which lead to the weakening of those verbal morphemes containing a final [s] (thus, for example, the second person singular *comes* (you (T) eat) might be confused with the third person singular *come* (s/he eats, you (V) eat). He argues:

...ante el posible debilitamiento en andaluz de la -s que puede diferenciar a las personas en los verbos, se compensa con el uso sintáctico...

... in the case of a potential weakening in Andalusian of the -s which enables differentiation between the person of the verb, this is compensated for syntactically...

According to this argument there should be a proportionally greater use of the pronoun *tú* in Sevillian Spanish. However, Carbonero points to evidence which tends to undermine this theory, namely that there is also a particularly high frequency of the first person singular pronoun. Yet here the verbal morpheme is phonetically unaffected. He explains the high occurrence of the second

person singular pronoun by a process of analogy, arguing that if a speaker has become used to using the pronoun in the [TU] position the habit will be transferred regardless of whether the pronoun is needed for the purposes of disambiguation.

However, Barrenechea and Alonso (1973), in their study of Buenos Aires speech, reject ambiguity as a significant reason for pronominal inclusion as they found that most cases could be resolved by recourse to context. Indeed in their data they found that only 4.04% of ambiguous references could not be interpreted. Furthermore, while the pronoun was more likely to be included where the person was not already encoded in the verb, its presence was not more likely than its absence. Their finding has been corroborated by Enríquez's (1984:215) extensive study.

A very different view was put forward by Silva-Corvalán (1982) who investigated ambiguity as one variable out of many acting as a constraint on absence of the pronoun. She differentiated between three main categories:

- (1) morphologically ambiguous verb forms, e.g. *iba*, *iría*.
- (2) morphologically unambiguous verb forms, e.g. *voy*.
- (3) Contextually unambiguous verbs, e.g. *yo hacía*, *había un negrito que... lo redondeaba*.

She found that ambiguity had a significant effect on expression with 69% of subjects expressed in category 1 verbs as opposed to 38% in category 2 and 39% in category 3.

One problem with such studies is that they quantify first, second and third person pronouns together without consideration of their respective functions in speech. For while the first and second person pronouns serve a deictic function, the third person (which is more likely to be morphologically ambiguous) is more commonly used for anaphoric reference. Thus presence or absence of the third person pronoun may respond to very different motivations to those of those used deictically. Furthermore, as was seen in the analysis of the French data (4.0), there could be a considerable disparity in the frequency of occurrences between one category of pronoun and another, for example between speaker reference and hearer reference. Such differences would not emerge in an analysis of the kind outlined above.

6.1.2. Emphasis and contrast

A more fruitful line of enquiry relates to the use of the personal pronoun not so much for the purposes of disambiguation but rather as a means of highlighting the

referent or of differentiating it from another referent.

Thus, Gili y Gaya states (1961:228):

En primera y segunda persona el pronombre del sujeto es enfático y significa insistencia particular en resaltar el sujeto.

In the first and second person the subject pronoun is emphatic and conveys a particular desire to highlight the referent

Rodríguez Izquierdo (1982) is not content with the explanation outlined above and seeks in the non-referential functions of language a pragmatic explanation for this frequency of use. In the case of the first person singular pronoun he speaks of the need to foreground the speaker ('*el protagonismo del hablante*') and he suggests that a high frequency of use of this personal pronoun may be allied with other features including a preference for the present tense, for the indicative over the subjunctive and for personalisation even to the extent of personalising truly impersonal constructions (*aquí hay mucha gente* becoming *aquí habemos mucha gente*). All these features have been identified by Brown and Levinson as being used in positive politeness strategies (1987:101-129) and tie in with Rodríguez Izquierdo's overall view that pronominal use corresponds to the emotive and conative/vocative (see Lyons, 1977:52) functions of language in addition to the purely transactional and thus to the attitude of the speaker towards his or her message (1982:120). This would link in with the high frequency of

occurrence of the first person pronoun noted in the French corpus and particularly high frequency of occurrence with verbs relating to the attitude of the speaker towards the message.

Haverkate (1984:52), who takes a pragmatic approach to pronominal reference, claims that the pronouns *yo*, *tú*, *nosotros/as*, and *vosotros/as* tend to appear at surface level only to express emphatic or contrastive reference while *usted/ustedes* may appear non-emphatically, either to resolve ambiguity or to express politeness. He further speculates that 'it may be the case that pronominal reference to the speaker occurs more frequently than pronominal reference to the hearer'. However, his data is mainly intuitive or based on written sources and he has not carried out any quantitative analyses. There have been a number of quantitative studies on the presence and absence of the pronoun (Barrenechea y Alonso, 1973, Cifuentes, 1981, Ejarque, 1977, Rosengren, 1974) which Enríquez presents along with her own (1984). There is a certain amount of variation in results which is unsurprising given the variety of approaches adopted in data collection. Enríquez's calculation (1984:348), based on a corpus of naturally-occurring data, is the most extensive and shows that, out of a total of 4,324 pronominal speaker/hearer references (*yo*, *nosotros/as*, *tú*, *vosotros/as*, *usted*, *ustedes*), 81% of these are to the

speaker (*yo* and *nosotros*) of which 93% are to the speaker alone. Her study further confirms the fact that the pronoun representing the V form appears in 80.74% of all potential occurrences. However, as was stated above, these studies do not attempt to investigate the motivations (other than the purely linguistic) which may lead to the presence of these pronouns, nor do they take account of the nature of the speech (or written) event quantified in influencing the data collected.

6.1.3. The verb type

Fernández (1951), who looked at the presence and absence of *yo* in a corpus of narratives and drama, is referred to in Rosengren's study (1974) of the presence and absence of pronouns in general (also based on a written corpus).

Rosengren refers to Fernández's findings (1974:24):

Ha podido constatar que es "casi obligado" el uso del pronombre con "los verbos de 'opinar'", por ejemplo cuando la opinión que se formula va "acompañada de determinados sentimientos subyacentes, en los que late precisamente el deseo de su validez o la aprensión acerca de su certeza".

He observed that the use of the pronoun is "virtually obligatory" with "verbs expressing 'opinion'", for example when the opinion "contains certain underlying feelings where there is precisely the hope that the opinion is right or fears about it being wrong".

Indeed, Fernández detected a high occurrence of the pronoun *yo* where a speaker is using an utterance to

'suscitar de algún modo, en la voluntad del que nos escucha, una decisión de determinada naturaleza, pero adoptada libremente' (in some way to bring about in the hearer a given decision which is nonetheless taken freely).

While such studies may give insight into questions of usage, the fact that they are based on written corpora detracts from their validity as evidence of spontaneous speech and their hypotheses need to be considered in relation to naturally-occurring spoken language. This is also a limitation of Haverkate's 1984 study, the value of which is that it takes a systematically pragmatic approach to speaker/hearer reference.

As mentioned above, Enríquez's study is of a very different order, being based on an extensive corpus of naturally-occurring spoken language. In her study of the subject personal pronoun in the educated speech of Madrid, she investigates the conditions which favour the presence or absence of the pronoun and argues for further pragmatic study of this area. Her study is mainly concerned with linguistic and social rather than interactional factors and seeks to establish a correlation between pronominal use and the variables of sex and age. She found that men, women, young or old all use these pronouns similarly with the one exception that the young use the formal second

person pronouns *usted*, *ustedes* less frequently, an unsurprising discovery in a country where the move from V to T has been rapid since political liberalisation. However, one finding potentially of interest to this study, is that certain types of verb are more likely to attract the subject pronoun than others. She states (1984:244):

(los) verbos que suponen una actividad psíquica suelen aparecer con índices de uso pronominal superiores a la media, (...) los verbos que menos utilizan los PpS (pronombres personales sujetos) son los de actividad exterior

verbs which express mental activity tend to enjoy an above average frequency of pronominal occurrence, (...) the verbs which use subject personal pronouns the least are those which express external activity

Enríquez divides verbs of mental activity into two categories, verbs of evaluation and verbs expressing a state of mind and points out that verbs of evaluation are particularly likely to attract a pronoun. To explain this, Enríquez uses a contrastive theory which has much in common with politeness theory (1984:245):

si aceptamos que el deseo de contraposición de personas puede ser el factor determinante de la presencia pronominal, podemos explicar, mediante este rasgo, el hecho de que sean los verbos estimativos los que más favorecen la presencia del pronombre, especialmente del *yo*, puesto que la expresión de una opinión lleva siempre implícita una toma de postura que favorece el que surja en el hablante la necesidad (o el deseo) de realizar lingüísticamente dicha contraposición, en especial cuando la referencia es el propio hablante

assuming that it is the desire to differentiate between individuals which determines the presence of the pronoun, it is therefore

possible to provide an explanation for the fact that it is verbs of evaluation which most favour the presence of the pronoun, particularly of *yo*. For in the expression of an opinion lies implicit the adoption of a point of view and thus the speaker is more likely to feel the need (or the desire) to make this contrast linguistically explicit, especially when the referent is the speaker him or herself

Enríquez's category of evaluative verbs (*creer, opinar, encontrar, pensar, considerar, etc.*) broadly corresponds to the quality hedges investigated in the analysis of the French data. These will be analysed at greater depth later in this study.

6.1.4 Concluding remarks

In this section the main explanations given for the presence of the subject pronouns were reviewed. It was noted that, in the case of the first and second person pronouns, these are more frequently absent than present and that disambiguation, in the case of these pronouns, cannot be accepted as a motivation for presence in those cases where they encode information already contained in the verb. In the case of third person pronouns (*V* forms), studies showed that the vast majority of these were contextually unambiguous and yet that there was a particularly high occurrence of the *V* form. The category of emphasis and contrast was particularly important in the case of the first and second person pronouns and

quantitative studies showed that speaker reference was considerably more frequent than hearer reference.

Similarly, the argument that verbs of mental activity and particularly verbs of evaluation are likely to attract a pronoun appeared to warrant further examination, especially in the light of what has already been said about first person singular hedging in French (4.1).

It was also noted that many of the quantitative studies in this area are unreliable for the purposes of this study insofar as they are based on idealised, intuitive or written data as opposed to naturally-occurring speech. Furthermore, they often quantify together pronouns which are used for anaphoric as well as for deictic purposes.

The aim of this study is not, however, to provide a quantitative study of the data, but rather, on the basis of a corpus of naturally-occurring spoken Spanish, to investigate firstly the potential of the interactional uses of the inclusion or exclusion of the pronoun and to examine what contribution politeness theory can make to an examination of these.

6.2 The Spanish pronominal system

The pronouns which are generally used for deictic reference in Spanish are detailed below (the third person

pronouns, *el, ella, ellos, ellos. ellas*, being used for anaphoric reference (2)). Impersonals will be included for as we saw in the case of French (5.4), they provided a resource for the deletion of the agent. Although this study will concentrate mainly on subject pronouns, for it is only in subject position that presence/absence of the pronoun is possible, alternative realisations of the pronouns will also be included.

The following pronouns will form the basis of the study:

1. [YO]
2. [NOSOTROS/AS]
3. [TÚ]
4. [VD].
5. [VOSOTROS/AS]
6. [VDS.]
7. [UNO/A]
8. [SE]

to which will be added the category of:

9. Impersonals

The pronouns and their alternative realisations are described below:

6.2.1 [YO]

Realisations of this pronoun include, in addition to the subject pronoun *yo* and/or the relevant verb ending (see verb tables), the disjunctive pronoun *mi*, the accusative and dative pronouns *me*, the gerundive *conmigo*, the determiners *mi*, *mis* and the possessive pronouns (el) *mío*, (la) *mía*, (los) *míos*, (las) *mías*.

6.2.2 [NOSOTROS/AS]

Realisations of this pronoun include, in addition to the subject pronoun *nosotros/as* and/or the relevant verb ending (see verb tables), the disjunctive pronoun *nosotros/as*, the accusative and dative pronouns *nos*, the determiners *nuestro/a/as/os*, and the possessive pronouns (el/la) *nuestro/a*, (los/las) *nuestros/as*.

6.2.3 [TU]

Realisations of this pronoun include, in addition to the subject pronoun *tu* and/or the relevant verb ending (see verb tables), the disjunctive pronoun *tú*, the accusative and dative pronouns *te*, the gerundive *contigo*, the determiners *tu*, *tus* and the possessive pronouns (el) *tuyo*, (la) *tuya*, (los) *tuyos*, (las) *tuyas*.

6.2.4 [VD.]

Realisations of this pronoun include, in addition to the subject pronoun *Vd.* and/or the relevant verb ending (see verb tables), the disjunctive pronoun *Vd.*, the accusative and dative pronouns *le, lo, la*, the gerundive reflexive pronoun *consigo*, the determiners *su, sus* and the possessive pronouns *(el) suyo, (la) suya, (los) suyos, (las) suyas*.

6.2.5 [VOSOTROS/AS]

Realisations of this pronoun include, in addition to the subject pronoun *vosotros/as* and/or the relevant verb ending (see verb tables), the disjunctive pronoun *vosotros/as*, the accusative and dative pronoun *os*, the determiners *vuestro/a/as/os*, and the possessive pronouns *(el/la) vuestro/a, (los/las) vuestros/as*.

6.2.6 [VDS.]

Realisations of this pronoun include, in addition to the subject pronoun *Vds.* and/or the relevant verb ending (see verb tables), the disjunctive pronoun *Vds.*, the accusative and dative pronouns *les, los, las*, the determiners *su, sus* and the possessive pronouns *(el) suyo, (la) suya, (los) suyos, (las) suyas*.

6.2.7 [UNO/A]

[UNO/A] is derived from the Latin *unus/a/um* ('one'). It has two main functions depending on the context in which it occurs.

[UNO/A] provides an alternative generic or indefinite to [SE].

(a) Aquí *se* habla castellano

(b) Aquí *uno/a* habla castellano

However, [UNO] and [SE] are not semantic equivalents. For, as will be shown in 6.2.8, there are two interpretations available for [SE] in (a), that of the agent unspecified and that of the passive. Only the first of these applies to (b) and thus, in such contexts, the use of [UNO/A] is more determinate than that of [SE]. Indeed [UNO/A] can be used to refer to people in general or to the speaker him or herself (María Moliner 1988:1420). Women speakers may choose between either form, using [UNO] to refer to people in general (and not specifically themselves) and [UNA] to other women in general or to themselves personally.

However, in contexts where [SE] is already present in another function, for example the reflexive function, it

cannot also be selected as an indefinite/generic pronoun and must be replaced by [UNO/A]. For example,

- (a) *Se levanta a las seis* he/she/it/you (formal)
get(s) up at six (i.e. a
specific statement)
- (b) *Se levanta uno a las seis* people/I get up at six
(generic/specific)

Here, [UNO/A] does not covary with [SE].

6.2.8 [SE]

Grammatically [SE], like [ON], is not a personal pronoun and yet certain uses of [SE] are personal. Much has been written about [SE] in Spanish (Molina Redondo (1974), García (1975), Babcock (1970), Martín Zorraquino (1979), etc.). Some of the debate centres around the definition of [SE] as a clitic as in the direct reflexive usage *se lava* or the indirect reflexive usage *se lava las manos* and the affective use, in *Juan se lo bebió todo* or as a pronoun as in *se habla español aquí* where the *se* refers to an unspecified actor. The debate centres on the status of [SE] in sentences such as *se venden casas* where it functions much as a passive. Linguists have generally concentrated on trying to generate an explanatory model

which assigns one and only one categorisation to each occurrence and potential occurrence of the pronoun/clitic. The present study is concerned with the pronominal use of [SE] and as in the study of French pronouns does not seek to assign only one value. However, the status of [SE] as a pronoun or a clitic is of relevance to this study. Let us take the following examples:

- (a) se vende esta casa
- (b) se vende estas casas
- (c) se venden estas casas
- (d) se venden casas

In (a) there are two potential values of [SE]: firstly, that there is an active unspecified individual or individuals who is/are selling the houses. This is a pronominal use of [SE]. An alternative value is that the agent of the sale is deleted through the passive use of [SE] and that the house is selling itself. Here [SE] functions as a clitic. In (b), only the former and in (c) only the latter interpretation is possible. Example (d), which can be a generic as well as a specific statement admits the two interpretations allowed by (a). Thus we have three degrees of agent deletion going from the impersonalisation of (b) to the agent deletion of (c) passing through the ambiguous (a) and (d) where both interpretations are potentially present.

6.2.3 Impersonals

As in the case of French (4.0), the wide range of impersonal linguistic devices which can be used for speaker hearer reference cannot be formally defined and therefore will not be included in this part of the study. However, these will be examined later from a qualitative perspective (6.3.7).

6.3 Analysis of the Spanish data

While studies of pronominal reference in Spanish have mainly been concerned with the presence or absence of the pronoun (6.1), this study aims to take a wider view, considering the inclusion of the personal pronoun as being an additional element to the inclusion of a given personal pronominal reference at all. Furthermore, the different personal pronouns will be analysed separately for, within politeness theory, the rationale for referring to the self in conversation may be very different from that of referring to an addressee. This section will therefore examine each of the pronouns in the order of their appearance in 6.2. The examples will be taken from the data described in 3.2.2 - 3.2.5. Supplementary data will be described when it is presented.

6.3.1 [YO]

What emerged from the study of the French pronoun [JE] (4.1) was its high rate of occurrence in comparison with other personal pronouns (with the exception of the multifunctional [ON]). Furthermore, its occurrence was concentrated in what could be defined, according to Brown and Levinson, as 'hedges'. These were described, in this study, as being of three kinds: hedges addressed to the Quality of an utterance (which invited the hearer to judge the quality of the utterance on the perceived quality of the speaker); attitudinal hedges (stressing the individual experience of the speaker and appealing to positive politeness); and performatives (which called upon the hearer to assess the felicity conditions enabling a speaker to make a claim of whatever nature and which also allowed the speaker to dissociate him or herself from any proposition so hedged). Indeed, Gricean and 'politeness' theory provided a powerful rationale for this being the case: the function of the pronoun used being dependent on extralinguistic factors for its interpretation.

In the case of the first person singular pronoun in Spanish, traditional explanations have not proved to be particularly powerful: disambiguation does not appear to be a major factor in accounting for the presence of the pronoun given that the verb is generally morphologically

unambiguous and, where it is not, context frequently disambiguates effectively, as in (2) in the example below:

- (1) (PF) yo he quedado (1) en llamarlos pero en el caso de que no
llame (2) ellos me llamarán también

In the above example, the presence of the pronoun *yo* (1) can be explained in terms of the other main explanation, that of contrast, insofar as *yo* is juxtaposed with *ellos*. However, contrast with another specified individual or individuals alone appears to account for few occurrences of the pronoun in the data.

Fernández, Rosengren and Enríquez (6.1.3) have all identified the type of verb which will more commonly attract the inclusion of the personal pronoun, that is verbs referring to mental activity. What they have not done is to suggest a convincing rationale for why this may be so. Haverkate (1984), in his extremely interesting study entitled 'Speech Acts, Speakers and Hearers' suggests that the prime motivation is pragmatic in nature and appeals to Grice's principle of sincerity arguing that this is the only condition which is speaker-centred. He quotes Moliner (1967:640) who states that the first person singular pronoun '*se emplea muy frecuentemente para atenuar un juicio, una censura o un reproche* (is used very frequently to mitigate a judgement, a criticism or a reproach). He goes on to say (1984:63) that 'egocentric

reference is inherent in the development of certain persuasive strategies in verbal interaction. It is used by speakers to bring into prominence their role in a state of affairs. In not a few cases, this prominence reflects a superior social position of the speaker with respect to the hearer'. Thus he moves beyond purely linguistic concerns to examine speech acts, speech events and role and status of the speaker. It is unfortunate, therefore, that his data is taken from either written sources or confected examples and that he only considers role and status in very few of these.

Two areas have been identified as being of interest in examining pragmatic factors influencing use. Firstly, there is the linguistic category of verb type identified by Enríquez and secondly there are contextual factors such as those mentioned above. In the discussion below, it should become apparent that the overlap between these two areas is such that it is more fruitful to deal with them together.

Enriquez identifies four main categories of verbs,

1. those which presuppose mental activity (objective),
e.g. *saber, querer, desear, entender*, etc..

2. evaluative verbs (in effect a subgroup of 1 which she prefers to study separately) (subjective), e.g. *creer*, *encontrar* (= *considerar*), *suponer*, etc..
3. verbs of state (passive), e.g. *ser*, *estar*, *tener*, *vivir*, etc..
4. verbs of activity (dynamic), e.g. *hacer*, *decir*, *ver*, *oir*, etc..

Her hypothesis, which is confirmed by her quantitative study, is that there will be a greater occurrence of the pronoun with verbs of mental activity; in particular those denoting evaluation will be more likely to attract a pronoun because of implicit contrast (between the speaker and the hearer). She does note that the vast majority of evaluative verbs occur in the first person singular.

While there are evident links between her approach and politeness theory as a theory capable of explaining why this should be so, it is evident that Enríquez' approach is essentially semantic while politeness theory is more concerned with the function of language in context. Let us start, therefore, from the hypothesis that firstly there should be a greater occurrence of verbs in the first person singular form where these verbs in some way act as hedges on the propositional content of the utterance (i.e.

Enríquez's categories 1 and 2) and that secondly the occurrence of the pronoun *yo* should be greater with these verbs. Thus it might be possible to suggest a modification to Enríquez's classification and also indicate a new area for quantitative research.

Enríquez makes a distinction between two types of verbs relating to mental activity, including in category 1 verbs such as "*saber, querer, desear, pensar, recordar, conocer, estar enterado (= 'saber'), entender, comprender, darse cuenta, advertir, notar (= 'advertir'), imaginar (= 'pensar'), elegir, enterarse, plantearse (= 'pensar sobre'), aprender, intentar, etc.*". In category 2 she places *creer, considerar, encontrar (= 'considerar'), estar de acuerdo (a favor, en contra, etc.), suponer (= 'creer'), imaginar (= 'creer'), plantearse, esperar (= 'creer'), entender (= 'creer')*.

If these verbs are reclassified in terms of their pragmatic function within an utterance, it emerges that, for example, verbs from both categories such as *saber, pensar* and *creer* act as hedges to the maxim of quality. e.g.

- (2) ...porque *pienso* que estamos organizando muchos finales...
- (3) *yo no sé* si podemos marcar...
- (4) *yo creo* que es lo que vamos a hacer...

Similarly, verbs which Enríquez classifies under categories 3 and 4 such as *tener*, *decir* and *plantear* can function in discourse as performative hedges, e.g.

- (5) no te *digo* que sea el único...
- (6) y te la *planteo*...
- (7) yo te *voy a decir* que... *tengo previsto*...

Enríquez finds in her data that there is a significantly high proportion of category 1 pronouns and a correspondingly low proportion of category 4 pronouns. However, if politeness theory does contribute to an explanation of these presences or absences, then the type of data examined is of crucial importance. It has already been suggested (Chapter Three) that the nature of the data (in terms of speech event, participants and goals) is likely to influence the language obtained. In the type of data analysed for both French and Spanish, accounts of one's personal actions appear to be considerably less relevant than the need to hedge statements.

Much of the naturally-occurring data examined so far by researchers has been of a standard interview format where the role of the interviewee is precisely to provide information. It is therefore much more likely in such circumstances that interviewees will talk about themselves in terms of main clause verbs, as for example in this extract (Stewart et al. forthcoming) between an

interviewer (E) and a seasoned pot-thrower (R):

(8) (E) ¿cuántos años has estado haciendo esto tú Roberto?

(R) pues, *empecé* de diez, *hice* ayer setenta, así que total, sesenta

What is more, the use of the first person reference will most likely be determined less by considerations of politeness than by a need to avoid ambiguity and to effect contrast. For in such interviews, while there may be some threat to face, this is generally centred around the willingness of the interviewee to provide information rather than the need of speaker and hearer to influence each other's behaviour beyond the speech situation.

However, where there is a potential threat to face, as in examples (9) and (10) below, it may be strategically desirable to put on record the importance of the identities of the participants:

(9) *te marchas* tú a cubrir la información... *me quedo* yo

(10) *yo* no sé si *tú* *habrás* *apreciado*.... *yo* al menos sí lo *he visto*

Therefore, in a study such as this it is more important to examine presence and absence of pronouns in context rather than to take a quantitative approach. It is interesting, therefore, to examine how first person singular reference can be used to modify threat to face.

It was already argued, in the case of the French data (4.1), that hedges could be interpreted as strengtheners or weakeners according to the perceived status of the speaker. In the case of Spanish it could be argued that the presence of the first person pronoun can act as a hedge on the verb that it accompanies and that it can be interpreted as a strengthener or weakener according to the same criteria.

The first extract is from a planning meeting between the two journalists responsible for the international page of *El Norte de Castilla*. The first speaker (M) is the senior reporter while (F) is in a junior position. The recording centres around a disagreement over the priority to be given to various items of news. (M) begins the discussion by assuming that there is broad agreement over the contents of the front page.

- (11) (M) no pero ya sabemos cuál es el contenido de la primera...
(F) sí pero no sé no lo he leído...

It is evident that a threat to face has been perceived as F uses the positive politeness device of 'token agreement' (Brown and Levinson, 1987:114), agreeing before directly disagreeing with M (thereby committing a FTA) using the form, which according to Enríquez is less frequent, *no sé*. If she had used the alternative *yo no sé*, it is arguable that the various FTAs implied in this response would have

become more salient. As the verb is unambiguously in the first person singular form, disambiguation is discounted as an explanatory factor, leaving contrast and emphasis as possible candidates. If F were to use *yo*, she would be contrasting herself with M and also highlighting her own importance. To highlight this contrast would be to attack M's assumption that they both share knowledge about the front page thus threatening H's face; alternatively it could threaten F's face by highlighting her potential inadequacy in gaining the relevant information.

Later in the same discussion F raises the resignation of military judges in Argentina as a possible item to be included in the newspaper:

(12) (F) hay otra cosa que es de la Argentina que han dimitido los jueces militares es una oposición clara al gobierno vamos es...

(M) bueno puede puede ser un contenido muy importante en la pagina latinoamérica pero *yo creo que* tampoco es para mucho más...

(F) *no sé* ya pues *no sé* están en constante desafío con el gobierno ¿no?

(M) *yo creo que* lo podemos dejar lo podemos dejar en un segundo plano...

(F) entonces ¿abrimos con Gorbachev?

F introduces the topic of the resignation of the military judges in Argentina as a statement of fact and does not use any hedging. M gives a dispreferred response using a

variety of politeness formulae before justifying his rejection by *yo creo que tampoco es...* using the personal pronoun. As was previously argued, the function of a hedge, in this case *yo*, as a strengthener or a weakener depends on extralinguistic factors such as the perceived status of the speaker. Given that M has the status which enables him to have the final word in any decisions to be taken, it could be argued that *yo* functions here as a strengthener to gain authority for his view. For he uses the pronoun when he is, in essence, refusing to foreground an item on Argentina (*yo creo que lo podemos dejar...*).

F's disagreement is aimed at the truth value of M's previous opinion and she repeats the unmarked form (*no sé ya pues no sé*) using the pseudo-agreement of *ya pues* to mitigate the repetition of her disagreement. She is using the verb *saber* which affords protection to both his and her face as her disagreement is ostensibly based around a lack of knowledge rather than a dissenting view.

Nonetheless her disagreement is clear when she gives the reason why she believes that this news item is worthier of attention than M's preferred item on Gorbachev. Here, too the absence of the pronoun can be explained in terms of perceived status of speaker. If F had used *yo no sé* or more crucially *yo no creo* she might have been more likely to lay herself open to the challenge that either she is

deficient in knowledge or that her opinion is of relatively little account.

In the example above, the use of the pronoun was argued to add authority to the view of a powerful speaker while the omission could form part of a face-protection exercise on the part of a weaker speaker. In the example below, both the more powerful (JB) and the less powerful speaker (FF) use the personal pronoun in their discussion over the items to be included on the local page:

(13) (JB) ... entonces hay que buscar un tema estrella para la cinco por decirlo así y luego seguimos un orden de importancia hasta la once... *yo no sé* si el tema tuyo de la FASA puede, podemos meterlo en la cinco... *yo no sé* la importancia que tiene y lo que ha pasado ahí...

(FF) *yo creo* que sí sería importante porque....

Here JB is stating the need for a major news item for page five and is inviting his colleague to justify his item on FASA for inclusion on that page. He has used the marked form on two occasions. Here the inclusion of *yo* can be explained by contrast: JB is contrasting his knowledge with that of FF. One implicature which can be derived from the inclusion of the pronoun may be that JB is inviting FF to tell him something which will help him make up his mind. An alternative interpretation would be that JB is appealing to his personal authority in determining their future action. However, such an interpretation is less

plausible given the fact that FF feels that the matter is not closed and goes on to provide reasons why his item should be included. In this particular context, the absence of the pronoun might have been more likely to signal a dispreferred response.

FF answers using the marked form *yo creo que...* and here the fact that his personal opinion has just been solicited protects his face against any charges of immodesty. Thus the use of a personal pronoun by a less powerful speaker can be sanctioned by the discourse role of the speaker.

Silva-Corvalán (1982) has looked at the presence of a pre-verbal adverb in affecting both the presence and absence of the pronoun and its position when present. Fernández (in Rosengren, 1984:24), on the basis of written data, suggests that the presence of the personal pronoun is more likely to be favoured at the beginning of a phonic group and indeed that there is one position-initial adverb (*ya* + present tense) which usually eliminates the use of *yo*.

This category is also examined by Enríquez (1984:157-8) who notes that, as well as *si* and *que* (when they function as '*partículas anunciativas*')

Efectivamente, partículas como *entonces, también, igualmente, en fin, en realidad, así, así pues, es decir (que), es que, es más, además, luego* (sin matiz temporal ni consecutivo), *desde luego, efectivamente*, se presentan a menudo en el enunciado expresando meramente una continuación una oración anterior, y pueden

incluso presentarse al comienzo de una replica sin que exista una referencia directa a lo dicho anteriormente pero estableciéndose con ello ese claro efecto de continuidad aludido.

In effect, particles such as *entonces*, *también*, *igualmente*, *en fin*, *en realidad*, *así*, *así pues*, *es decir (que)*, *es que*, *es más*, *además*, *luego* (not used as a temporal or consecutive marker), *desde luego*, *efectivamente*, often occur in an utterance expressing no more than continuity with a previous utterance, and can even occur at the beginning of a reply without there being any direct reference to what has previously been said in order to give a clear impression of implied continuity.

What is of interest here is that the adverbs mentioned above are clear examples of hedges in themselves, modifying the illocutionary force of the verb as in:

- (14) *entonces* creo que es una información interesante...
- (15) *es que* no creo que haya nada como para meterlo...
- (16) *entonces* yo creo que hoy...

One point which arises from Enríquez's statement is the possible cohesive function of the adverbial hedge in establishing conversational relevance. It could be argued that one function of the presence of the pronoun *yo* at the beginning of the utterance is that of establishing relevance by highlighting the speaker's role in the speech situation and that in such circumstances speakers could be orienting to Grice's Relevance Maxim. If this is the case, then this cohesive function can be fulfilled by the presence of one of the particles above eliminating the need for the pronoun. The pronoun would only be present, therefore, if it were fulfilling another function, for

example that of hedging an opinion. In such circumstances, the adverbial hedge would also function as a hedge on the personal pronoun as in (16) above.

In this section, Enríquez's quantitative findings that the presence of the pronoun *yo* is greater with verbs relating to mental activity than with other verbs (although presence is still not greater than absence) were related to this study's findings in 4.1 and a refinement to the categorization of these verbs was suggested. It was argued that, in the case of first person singular reference where the information encoded in the pronoun already duplicated that already morphologically encoded, the presence of the pronoun could be attributed to at least two functions, both explicable by politeness theory. As the initial element of an utterance, the presence of the pronoun could be explained by its cohesive function: it could enable a speaker to establish relevance in terms of the speech situation for the utterance. A further function of the pronoun would be that of a hedge: as in the case of the hedges examined in 4.1, its interpretation as a strengthener or weakener would depend on contextual factors, essentially the perceived status and role of the speaker.

6.3.2 [NOSOTROS/AS]

In the French data (4.2) no occurrences of the first person plural subject pronoun were identified, this function having largely be taken over by [ON]. It was noted that the main functions of [NOUS] in the data under examination were to achieve contrastivity between a group including the speaker and another unspecified group (*c'est nous qui...*), to achieve a sense of corporate identity mainly through the use of the possessive adjective and to appeal to the hearer's positive face through the imperative form. It was shown how the subject pronoun *nous* can be used to refer to the speaker alone. From the perspective of politeness theory this use could be motivated by a desire to spread responsibility for an action or to gain respectability for it through appealing to wider support. Section 4.2 also examined how contextual factors influenced hearer interpretation and argued that, in all events, more than one value could be present in the utterance.

In Spanish [NOSOTROS] does not appear to have ceded ground to non-personal pronouns such as [SE] and [UNA/O]. As well as being used to refer to the self and others, it also fulfils the function of the 'royal or authorial we' or '*plural mayestático*', a form originally used by popes and

kings and which is mainly found now in academic writing and is falling into disuse (Alvarez Martínez, 1989:42). The personal pronoun [NOSOTROS] agrees in gender, with [NOSOTRAS] used to refer to an entirely female group inclusive of speaker and [NOSOTROS] referring to a group with at least one male inclusive of speaker. However, as the first person plural form is morphologically unambiguous, the presence of the subject pronoun is the exception rather than the rule and is generally not motivated by the need for disambiguation. Indeed, in Enríquez's study (1984:348) the pronoun is only present in 10.4% of utterances. According to her study, it is a particularly productive form for in terms of total presences, the [NOSOTROS] subject form (with or without pronoun) accounted for 15.3% of total occurrences, second to [YO]. Certainly, in our data, it is a form which is used extensively in negotiation.

In this section it will be argued that [NOSOTROS] (without the presence of the subject pronoun) can be used by the speaker for one of the purposes served by [ON], that is to refer to the speaker him or herself while protecting the positive face of the hearer (by assuming agreement with and collaboration in whatever proposition is being made) and also protecting the negative face of the speaker (by appealing to wider support to an unspecified group made up of the speaker + other(s)). Unlike [ON] however, the

speaker is always included semantically in the reference and therefore motivations for using this form are more likely to stem from positive politeness ([ON] can be used for both positive and negative politeness). Indeed, unlike [ON], [NOSOTROS] is not generally used for generic statements which are more likely to be expressed using [SE]. [NOSOTROS] can also be used for both inclusive and exclusive reference. Indeed, this area has been examined by Haverkate (1984:20) from the perspective of speech act theory. He identifies speech acts that are incompatible with exclusive reference (e.g. *saquemos entradas* 'shall we (let's) get some tickets ') and those which are incompatible with inclusive reference (e.g. *¿podemos entrar?* 'can we come in?') as well as those which are indistinguishable. In the interpretation of all these, it is the context which decides which interpretation is to be retained. Nonetheless, this distinction is relevant to the extent that a speaker can draw on the positive politeness of using an inclusive reference thereby implying that the needs of the speaker and hearer(s) are compatible and also draw on exclusive reference through the use of the 'corporate we' thereby implying external support for the speaker's position.

In the remainder of this section we shall examine how certain speakers use [NOSOTROS] during negotiation.

In the following extracts [NOSOTROS] is being used mainly by the senior (JB) but also by the junior reporter (FF) to reach some kind of agreement on what information is going to be given priority in the newspaper (i.e. whether a given article is to be included on page five rather than page eight). There is an evident threat to FF's face as he would like his news story to be given priority. The decision lies in the hands of JB who invites FF to support his claim:

- (17) (JB) yo no sé si el tema tuyo de FASA puede... *podemos* meterlo en la cinco, yo no sé la importancia que tiene y lo que ha pasado ahí...

Here, JB has effected a repair away from a construction (noun + *puede (meterse)*) which, had it been completed, would have removed all reference to agency in the decision about what should go on page 5. JB has changed, mid-utterance, to the inclusive/exclusive 'we' form *podemos*, a form which he exploits intensively during the extended exchange on this topic. Thus, three interpretations become possible: that FF is a participant in this decision-making process; and/or that JB is adhering to policy laid down by a wider group than he alone, in this instance probably the newspaper itself and is appealing to their authority to support any decision he may have to take; or that he is using this form to refer to himself alone as it is he who will take the decision.

As argued previously (5.2.2), it is knowledge of the role and status of the participants and their purposes in negotiation which is most helpful in assigning a preferred interpretation, although in the example above both speaker and hearer may find it strategically desirable to allow more than one interpretation to coexist.

In the following extract, while JB continues to use [NOSOTROS] arguing that if the unions sign an expected agreement in time the news item will appear on page five and if not, it will not. FF appears to agree with his proposals by summarising them but significantly uses the impersonal [SE] and deletes a reference to an agent. He further modifies the directness of his utterances by using the conditional tense. Given that FF does not have the authority to establish policy, he is thus able to protect his face against any claims that he is usurping JB's authority. He is also able to disassociate himself from this decision.

- (18) (JB) entonces bueno si se... el asunto es que si se firma lo-
podemos dar en la cinco pero si no se firma todavía esta
tarde entonces eso *no lo podemos dar* en la cinco
- (FF) si se llegase a firmar el convenio yo creo que *sí podría*
ir en la cinco porque sería la noticia más importante
quizá del día... pero si no se firma... pues... es una
más que iría en la página ocho de laboral.

It is particularly interesting to compare these two turns because in essence they appear to convey the same propositional content and yet their form is very different. FF'S turn is characterised by a number of negative politeness devices which tend towards tentativizing his utterances (e.g. use of imperfect subjunctive rendering the possible signing of the agreement more remote, the use of the hedge *quizá* in presenting his argument that this item of news would be the most important). However, what leads us to suppose that these are conventional politeness devices is the presence of the strengthener *si* which reinforces the speaker's attachment to the proposition that if the union agreement is signed the news item should appear on page five. Why should he go to such pains to express agreement with a proposition he himself is known to support? One explanation could be that he wishes to dissociate himself from the second proposition i.e. that if the agreement is not signed the item does not appear on page five: he could be using the positive politeness device of seeking agreement (Brown and Levinson 1987:112-113) before disagreeing. If there is a proposition that he does agree with, this may be taken to contrast with one that he does not.

When JB presents the consequences of the agreement not being signed he states *no lo podemos dar en la cinco*

placing the emphasis on the fact that it is impossible and on the agent [NUESTROS]. In FF's version (*es una más que iría en la página 8*), he makes no reference to what is or is not possible, nor to the agent. In fact, he presents the consequence as a generic statement, the apodosis *si no se firma* leading naturally to the protasis discussed above. However, the use of the non-standard conditional *iría* rather than the expected future *irá* also serves to tentativize this proposition. One interpretation would be that FF does not have the authority to decide what goes on page 8 (an interpretation which could be applied to his decision not to refer to an agent in *si podría ir*); another, taking account of the fact that FF does not agree with the proposition (that his news item should go on page eight), is that he is thus dissociating himself from the decision and, in effect, dissociating himself from his inclusion as a decision-maker potentially implicit in JB's use of *podemos*. Another implication of FF's use of the conditional *iría* is that the proposition only obtains if certain conditions also obtain, in this instance that the article would go on page eight in certain circumstances, e.g. if JB's opinions prevailed). However, this line of thinking is not followed through. What also remains OFF RECORD (see Brown and Levinson 1984:211-227) is FF's opinion on whether the item should appear on page five even if the agreement is not signed, the issue which is at the heart of the discussion.

What is of interest here is that clearly there are both interpretations, inclusive and exclusive, of [NOSOTROS] present in such interactions. In the example above, the hearer, by adopting impersonalisation in a parallel utterance reinforces, in effect, an exclusive interpretation.

In example (19) below, already discussed in 6.3.1, the hearer F also disassociates herself from an inclusive interpretation. As in example (18), it is conflict between competing interpretations which may give rise to the need to pay linguistic attention to either or both the speaker's and hearer's face. The turbulence is caused, in part, by the direct conflict between the positive politeness principle of 'seek agreement' (Brown and Levinson 1987:112) and the negative politeness principle of 'do not presume/assume' (Brown and Levinson 1987:144).

- (19) (M) no pero ya sabemos cuál es el contenido de la primera de...
(F) sí pero no sé no lo he leído

Here it is evident that F has interpreted M's use of [NOSOTROS] as being inclusive. In order to dissociate herself from what she feels to be erroneous inclusion in a group including M, F, like FF in (18) above, has recourse to face-work using the conventional positive politeness

device of agreement and also justifying her dissociation by giving a reason.

In extract 20 below there is a further example of the potential conflict between differing interpretations of [NOSOTROS]. The junior sports reporter, M, is suggesting what should be included on the following day's sports page. The senior reporter, F, is responding to these suggestions:

- (20) (M) juegan a las siete y media bueno tampoco es tan mala hora
bueno aquí *hemos quedado* aquí una grande de [Diez Miguell]
que puede ir quizá aquí ¿no? y *metemos* aquí una más pequeña
si te parece...
- (F) sí claro luego habrá que buscar las fotos y luego en
función de cada una de la...
- (M) sí y [.....] hacer la primera maqueta lo *tiramos* hasta
aquí [como un] poco más de media página quizá no sé ¿qué te
parece?

Here the junior reporter has used [NOSOTROS] on three occasions in much the same way as the senior reporter in the previous extract. However, on each of these he has sought confirmation from the senior reporter. In the first he follows an account of what they had decided (*hemos quedado*) with a tag question ¿no?. Later he proposes the inclusion of a smaller photograph in *metemos aquí una más pequeña*, which he makes conditional on the agreement of the senior reporter using *si te parece*. Finally, he follows up his statement *lo tiramos hasta aquí* with the interrogative ¿Qué te parece? It is interesting that tag

questions in English have been singled out initially as a marker of women's language (Lakoff, 1975) and later as 'powerless language' by O'Barr and Atkins (1980). Cameron, McAlinden and O'Leary (1988) take issue with this analysis and adduce evidence to show that tags can function as an interactional resource of the powerful. It should be clear from this study that it is our view that the function of a linguistic resource is located less in its linguistic form than in factors which are totally extralinguistic - thus a taxonomy of tags as being powerful or powerless is meaningless without knowledge about the role, status and purpose of the speaker using them within a speech event.

In this particular speech event, it may be that the use of tags (not restricted to those cited above) arises precisely from a conflict between role and status. The junior reporter does not have the status of his senior and therefore cannot take final decisions. However, it is he who is establishing the agenda for the discussion with the senior reporter who mainly reacts to his proposals. Thus he is powerful in terms of the dynamics of the speech event. It is therefore likely that he is using these tags to pay attention to F's positive face. In any event, these tags afford protection to his negative face for if he is challenged about his right to determine policy, they give him the option to claim that what he has said has merely

the force of suggestion, the tags acting as a hedge on the illocutionary force of his utterances.

To sum up, it can be said that there are three principle interpretations of [NOSOTROS] which may be current in a given use of the pronoun:

- 1) [NOSOTROS] can be used to refer to the speaker alone. Here it may function as a positive politeness device in instances where a more powerful speaker is potentially threatening hearer's face by implying inclusion of the hearer. In cases where the hearer does not wish to participate in this polite fiction, he or she has to engage in face-work in order to try to dissociate him or herself from the implied inclusive 'we'. It can be used by the less powerful speaker to imply external support for an opinion and therefore add weight to an opinion which might otherwise be judged on the status of the speaker.
- 2) [NOSOTROS] can also be used to refer to speaker and hearer. However, as the power semantic operating above might also be considered to obtain here too, a speaker who uses this form without feeling he or she has the authority to do so, may also have to engage in face-work in order to make this clear.

- 3) [NOSOTROS] can also be used to refer to the speaker and other(s) and exclude the hearer. Here the speaker can draw support for a particular proposition.

Which interpretations become salient for speakers and hearers depends on contextual factors. That speakers are aware of these alternative values can be seen in the fact that they may seek to dissociate themselves from one or more of these. Like [ON], [NOSOTROS] can be used to refer to a 'corporate we'. To a greater extent than [ON], [NOSOTROS] can function as a positive politeness device by including both speaker and hearer in an activity. For this reason, it is difficult for a hearer to reject a proposition without threatening his or her interlocutor's positive face.

6.3.3 [TÚ]

In 4.3.1 the rules which govern the T/V distinction in French were discussed. Similar rules apply in the case of peninsular Spanish. The main differences lie in the distribution of use: in Spanish T is used much more readily than T in French and much more frequently than 30 years ago (Butt and Benjamin 1988:105). Use is generally reciprocal and normally the chosen form of address remains the same or moves in the direction from V to T. However,

the V form may be substituted for T on occasions to express disapproval (for example when a parent is angry with a child). Both T and V can also be used for generic statements and here they covary with the impersonals [UNO] and [SE]. Enríquez (1984) has divided her data on [TÚ] into two categories, specific and generic. She has collected almost double the number of occurrences of generic [TÚ] than of specific [TÚ] which she investigates for the presence of the subject pronoun. Leaving aside problems of definition of the generic [TÚ] (see 4.3.1), these figures may be a direct reflection of the type of interviews being used (between an informant and an unknown interviewer), and therefore not relevant to the aims of this study. However, what is interesting is the low occurrence of the subject pronoun with the generic [TÚ] (8.82% compared with 26.22% for the specific [TÚ]). We shall examine this later.

In the study of the French data (4.3 and 4.4) both V and T were used infrequently in the meeting, indeed the use of V rarely placed on record whether the normal mode of address in the singular was T or V given its formal ambiguity (sing./plural). Given the nature of the meeting, the main channel of communication was through the chair. Within such a context, the use of T to the most powerful member of the meeting might be face-threatening in the sense that a speaker might be seen unnecessarily to appeal to

solidarity to achieve his or her purposes or to lack adequate respect for the other person.

All the data recorded in Spain was between individuals who habitually use T with their colleagues regardless of situation. Furthermore, as most of the recordings were of two individuals, auditors were unlikely to affect language choices in the same way as was possible in the French data. In the French data a main concern was to examine the way in which the indeterminacy of [VOUS] compared with the relative determinacy of [TU] could be exploited in the interests of politeness. In this section we shall focus on issues relating to [TÚ] which are specific to Spanish, notably the presence and absence of the pronoun. Initially we shall focus on corroborative and contrastive uses of the pronoun, uses which Enríquez (1984:288) found to attract a significantly higher frequency of occurrence of the pronoun and which can be found in the face-threatening context of disagreement; subsequently we shall examine the use of [TÚ] in directives where the face-threatening act consists of an attempt to influence the behaviour of the hearer; and, finally we shall examine the generic use of [TÚ].

(1) Corroborative and contrastive uses of [TÚ]

In certain speech situations such as discussion, for example, the primary aim of which may be to convince and persuade, the main loci for face-threatening acts are where there is disagreement or potential disagreement between participants. Thus, from a politeness perspective, participants may find it in their interest to stress agreement where possible and to seek to minimise disagreement. Hence they may find themselves wishing to corroborate the arguments of others where possible or conversely to establish the individuality of the participants through contrast where opinions diverge.

a) Corroborative Use of [TÚ]

Enriquez has studied the presence of the personal pronoun in what she calls corroborative uses, that is in '*aquellos casos en que el sujeto de la oración presenta o podía presentar una contraposición de carácter positivo con otro u otros actantes presente en el discurso*' (1984:288)

(those instances where the subject of the utterance is or may be shown in a positive contrast with one or more other participants in the speech event). She gives as one of her examples:

...Eso es un tema difícilísimo y, además, *tú lo sabes también*

Her definition of corroborative use would appear to have much in common with a key positive politeness strategy,

that of claiming common ground with a speaker, seeking agreement and avoiding disagreement. It seems, from our data, therefore, that politeness theory can provide a rationale for the use of the second person pronoun in such circumstances. In the following extract which is taken from a debate between two male academics about the status of women within the university, JV is taking the role of interviewer/chairman of the debate. While his main purpose is to elicit the ideas of AH, a sociologist, and therefore the ostensible 'expert' in the discussion, JV is also giving his own opinion which conflicts with that of AH:

- (21) (JV) *fíjate que es que...ahí se plantea una cuestión que a mí me parece importante... la que dices tú... la de la inercia... yo no sé si tú habrás apreciado... yo al menos sí lo... lo he visto que en general dentro de los estudiantes la mujer es bastante más consciente que el hombre... no sé si estudia más pero me da la impresión de que entiende comprende mejor... si se quiere decir... pues es que es más inteligente... sin embargo lo que dices tú... una vez que termina sus estudios... bueno la sociedad eso no lo tiene muy en cuenta y... y se prefiere en general al hombre a la mujer... eso no deja de ser sorprendente... no desde el punto de vista sociológico que no lo es y tú lo has explicado muy bien... sino sobre todo desde un punto de vista de una sociedad tecnificada... una sociedad en la que se busca la cualificación la mejor preparación ¿por qué en un momento determinado no se elige verdaderamente a las personas que están teóricamente más cualificadas mejor preparadas... sino que se elige a otras que se sitúan a un nivel quizás algo más bajo?*

What is face-threatening in this exchange is that JV is not satisfied with AH's explanation why there are so few women academics. However, in framing this disagreement,

his strategy appears to be oriented towards AH's positive face. He starts by selecting an area of common ground:

(22) (JV) ahí se plantea una cuestión que *a mí me parece* importante,
la que *dices tú*...

By using the disjunctive *a mí* and including the personal pronoun *tú*, JV has emphasised both speaker and hearer in a situation where there is no threat to face, one of agreement. Indeed, as he builds his argument he relates it back at a number of points to AH's previous turn with *lo que dices tú* and later still with the positively positive politeness *y tú lo has explicado muy bien*. In this way he is able to build a broad basis of agreement and put on record his solidarity with and respect for his interlocutor, before committing the potentially face-threatening act of asking for a more satisfactory explanation of why women who gain better qualifications than men are less likely to gain employment (a face-threatening act). In this example, the motivation for the corroborative use of the second person pronoun could be rooted in positive politeness.

b) Contrastive Use of [TÚ]

Enríquez similarly finds a high occurrence of the personal pronoun *tú* (and also *yo*) where '*se quiere establecer una*

oposición entre el sujeto y otro u otros participantes. e implica siempre una negación, bien tacita, bien expresa, de una de las actitudes enfrentadas' (where the intention is to set up an opposition between one or more participants, and always implies a negation whether this is implicit or explicit of one of the attitudes thus in opposition). One of her examples is:

... perdona que no haga la comparación que tú haces

Here again, politeness theory may be able to provide an explanation. We already noted the increased use of the first person pronoun [YO] (4.1) with verbs expressing personal opinion and argued that such hedging was a negative politeness strategy which, depending on the role and status of the speaker, could be interpreted as a strengthener or a weakener. Similarly, the use of the second person form and the inclusion of the personal pronoun could respond to a desire to place on record a respect for the other person's opinions (working in an opposite direction from the positive politeness of the inclusive 'we' in [NOSOTROS/AS]). If we look at the extract we examined above, this strategy appears to have been used by JV:

- (23) (JV) yo no sé si tú habrás apreciado... yo al menos sí lo... lo he visto que en general la mujer es bastante más consciente que el hombre

Before making his point that he believes that women are a good deal more aware, JV may feel that there is a potential for disagreement over this point. This may explain why he refers directly to his lack of knowledge about AH's state of knowledge about his new argument and establishes a sharp contrast between himself and AH using the emphatic particle *si* and the hedge *al menos* which implies that his experience may indeed not be shared with anyone else. Thus he has made it completely clear that what he is about to say is a personal opinion based on personal experience (which cannot be challenged by anyone as they have not had this experience). JV further protects his opinion from challenge by claiming that it is no more than a general rule (*en general*).

In examples 21-23 above, it appears that one motivation for the inclusion of the pronoun [TÚ] is to pay attention to the face of the hearer either by highlighting areas of agreement between speaker and hearer or by putting on record the fact that the speaker is aware of the face of the hearer in cases of disagreement.

(ii) Directives

According to Lyons (1977:745) directives are 'utterances which impose, or propose, some course of action or pattern of behaviour and indicate that it should be carried out'.

This is another area where there is frequent potential for threat to face and one which was already examined in the study of [ON] in the French data (Chapter 5). Here it was argued that in certain contexts one of the values of [ON] is that of second person reference and that the force of this is mitigated by the presence of two other principle interpretations, that of the generic 'one' and that of the inclusive 'we'. It was already noted that [TÚ] in Spanish can be used for specific and generic reference and in the case of generic reference, the pronoun may in fact be used to refer to the speaker. In our data there was considerable evidence for the second person singular form being used for directive language as well as more indirect forms such as the impersonal [SE]. This is also an area which is unlikely to have been examined in other studies given that the standard interview format of data-collection is unlikely to yield very many instances of directive language.

The data examined in this section is taken from a meeting between two radio newscasters who are deciding what items are to be covered in the following day's newcasts. The senior newscaster (MD) is ultimately responsible for the broadcasts and it is he who allocates responsibilities. The junior newscaster (PF) participates less in the discussion and limits his interventions in the main to

expressing agreement, raising topics and asking for clarification.

A frequent mismatch between form and function is at the core of speech act theory and therefore politeness theory, and indeed is a prime distinction drawn by Lyons (1979:745) when discussing this topic. He thus distinguishes between grammatical form ('declarative', 'interrogative' and 'imperative' sentences) and function (utterances which are 'statements', 'questions' or 'commands') Therefore, it would seem appropriate to look, in this section, at the linguistic form which most closely matches the directive function, that is, the imperative, and also at other forms which, in our data, appear to serve this function.

The main linguistic forms used in the corpus for expressing directives are:

- the imperative
- the present declarative

(a) The imperative

The imperative is the linguistic form which directly mirrors the speech act of commanding and to use this form for this purpose would correspond to what Brown and Levinson call (1987:94) bald-on-record strategy, that is speaking in conformity with Grice's maxims. They argue that this form will be used 'in general, whenever S wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency *more than* he wants to satisfy H's face' (1987:95). Otherwise this form can be used for speech acts which are not, in fact, commands but which are in the interest of H such as, for example, invitations or offers.

In the data, there were a number of uses of the second person imperative which could not be interpreted as commands. For example:

(24) (PF) pero *dime* lo que... lo que te parece que mañana destaquemos
en la información

Here, PF does not only use *dime* to request information; this request could also be interpreted as an offer where, according to Brown and Levinson (1987:95), 'S insists that H may impose on S's negative face'. For, in effect, PF is asking for instructions from MD, thus acknowledging MD's status as senior reporter.

Further examples of offers occur where MD uses the imperative to reduce PF's workload, an act which is in PF's interest. For example:

(25) (MD) ... ese tema *olvídate* de él en principio

(26) (MD) eso *déjalos*... *olvídate de ellos* porque vas a tener bastante con lo del Ayuntamiento

The imperative also occurs in what Brown and Levinson (1987:96) call 'attention getters', where 'S speaks as if maximum efficiency were very important'. For example:

(27) (MD) oye me parece que... que lo que tienes que hacer es...

(28) (MD) y después... después está el... *espérate* a ver, el tema de Comisiones Obreras del hospital psiquiátrico

Another use of the imperative, this time as a direct command, occurs 'where the focus of interaction is task-oriented (and where) face redress may be felt to be irrelevant' (1987:97).

(29) (MD) *pásame* ese papel...

However, there were no occurrences of the imperative where MD was telling PF to do any action of any importance, such as to cover a given item or to contact a given source. Nonetheless, the imperative form is not threatening in itself. Depending on the context, it can be seen as a positive politeness resource where the speaker is using

the form to highlight the good relations between speaker and hearer and to minimise the implied threat of the FTA.

Brown and Levinson also mention what they call the 'passive imperative' (1987:196) (e.g. 'let it be done') which they find archaic and stilted, probably because it uses the subjunctive mood which has largely fallen into disuse in English in those occurrences where its presence is transparent. Lyons (1977:747) does not consider the third person imperative a true imperative, but prefers to use the generic term 'jussive sentence' of which sentences (or utterances) containing the imperative or subjunctive indicative moods are subsets. He notes (1977:817) that:

there is a sense in which directives necessarily point to the future; and also that in many languages the functions of the subjunctive merge with that of the imperative. The relationship between the subjunctive and the imperative is traditionally accounted for in terms of the notion of will. But there is no formal difference in the Indo-European languages between the two kinds of subjunctive that are traditionally distinguished by grammarians as the subjunctive of will and the subjunctive of likelihood (or possibility); and it is arguable that there is no difference in meaning between them either.

In short, the subjunctive is the mood of non-factivity and as such may act as a hedge on the truth-value of an utterance performing, as it were, the role of a systematised hedge on Grice's Maxim of Quality. In Spanish the subjunctive is an extremely productive linguistic resource and, interestingly, all negative commands and all

commands addressed in the V form, take the subjunctive mood. For example:

imperative	ven	come (you fam.)
subjunctive	no vengas	don't come (you fam.)
imperative	venga	come (you pol.)
subjunctive	no venga	don't come (you pol.)

This may be an example, much in the same way as the V form itself, of a fossilized politeness formula. Indeed Lavandera writes (1977:129) that '*el reemplazo del imperativo por el presente del subjuntivo (u homonimia) consituye una estrategia de deferencia*'.

In Spanish there is a similar form to Brown and Levinson's 'let it be done' which can be used to make indirect commands but which forms part of a wider paradigm:

imperative	házlo/hágalo	do it
subjunctive	que lo haga (yo, él, ella, Vd.)	let/may I, s/he, you (sing. pol.) do it
	que lo hagas (tú)	let/may you (sing. fam.) do it
	que lo hagamos (nosotros/as)	let/may we do it
	que lo hagáis (vosotros/as)	let/may you (fam. pl.)
	que lo hagan (ellos/as)	let/may them do it
	que se haga	let it be done

While these forms do not occur frequently within our restricted corpus, they are, nonetheless, a common linguistic device which may conventionally reduce the threat to face of the bald-on-record imperative by expressing this, to use Lyons' (1977:751) terminology, as

a 'demand' (using the form of the 'third person imperative') and not a 'command' as 'demands' 'are not necessarily addressed to those upon whom the obligation of fulfilment is imposed'. Furthermore, they displace the source of the command away from the speaker insofar as the main verb is ellipted, for example (*quiero*) *que lo hagas*. However, as has been seen, the illocutionary force of a directive is not located in its linguistic form so much as in extralinguistic features. While the jussive utterance (*que* + subjunctive) may encode systemic indirectness unlike the imperative form, it may indeed be used as a strengthener or a weakener according to context. For example, when a parent says to a child:

ven ven... *que vengas* de una vez

the force of the jussive utterance (*que* + subjunctive) would be that of a strengthener in comparison with the imperative form.

Brown and Levinson (1987:196) argue that one function of such forms is to defocus the agent by shifting the emphasis to the circumstances which would allow a given action or even to allow agent deletion. There is one example of defocussing in our data. MD wants PF to phone the Town Hall and find out their view of a strike at a psychiatric hospital.

(30) (MD) pues una huelga que convoca CCOO en el Hospital Psiquiátrico por la política de personal... entonces tú como conoces muy bien a los de la Diputación pues le(s) das un telefonazo y *que te cuenten* la versión de la patronal en este caso

MD has asked PF to do two things, to phone the Town Hall, and secondly to find out their version of events. However, in the form *que te cuenten* the focus has been shifted from PF (who is now referred to by the object pronoun *te*) to an indeterminate 'them' at the Town Hall. Instead of saying the equivalent of 'get them to', he has expressed this command as a desire that 'they' should tell PF their version. Implicit in all this is the fact that 'they' will tell PF nothing unless he asks them to do so. This extract exemplifies what Brown and Levinson call off-record politeness and is an apparent violation of Grice's Maxim of Manner. It corresponds most closely to Off-record strategy 14 (1987:226) where the speaker displaces H and 'pretends to address the FTA to someone who it wouldn't threaten', in this case the unidentified representatives of the Town Hall over whom MD has no authority.

This form of displacement can also allow agent deletion not only through impersonalisation (*que se cuente*) but also through allowing the entire focus to fall on a third party (*que cuenten ellos*).

This appears to be a very productive area for politeness strategy and therefore it would be of considerable interest to investigate further actual occurrences of this form.

(b) The present tense declarative

This is a linguistic form which is not grammatically associated with the directive function. Nonetheless, in this particular extract, it is the form most commonly used by MD to phrase his commands:

- (31) (MD) oye me parece que lo que tienes que hacer es... *te marchas tú* a cubrir la información del Ayuntamiento, el pleno que va a haber esta tarde y la rueda de prensa que hay después y entonces me quedo yo con... con todo el tema de... de laboral.
- (32) (MD) y además como después habrá rueda de prensa del alcalde para explicar en que ha consistido la... la historia ésta... pues, bueno lo que tienes... lo que se hace es... se cubre todo eso y... entonces *preparas* como tres minutos para mañana... le *dejas* preparado a Pura una información para que la meta a las... a las siete y media... la suya ya sabes... una cosa bastante más ligera porque a esas horas está la gente todavía medio dormida y después pues bueno pues *montas* para el informativo de las dos menos cuarto nuestro la información normal.

In the first extract there is an allocation of responsibilities; MD states what PF will do (cover the news from the Town Hall) and also states what he will do (take on labour relations). Here the inclusion of the personal pronouns *yo* and *tú* fulfils a clearly contrastive purpose. While it is clear that *te marchas tú* has a

directive function (as it is a reformulation of (*lo que tienes que hacer*)), the use of the declarative implies prior agreement: it is being used to summarise an uncontroversial state of affairs, in this case an agreed distribution of labour between the two journalists. As such it affords protection to the faces of both the speaker and the hearer.

The declarative is frequently used throughout the meeting to refer to the tasks that PF is to carry out as can be seen from the example 32 (*preparas, dejas, montas*). It is interesting that the second person singular can also be used for generalization and this value is also present in these occurrences with the implication that anyone in this situation would behave in the same way. The presence of this value is important from the perspective of politeness theory because it shifts the focus from the hearer as an individual to that of the hearer as the representative of a given role. In this way the use of the declarative can be viewed as a politeness strategy aimed at protecting H's face, for, by implying prior agreement (at an individual level as well as that of the individual's role), it avoids the use of the face-threatening imperative. Its force as a directive depends entirely on the speaker-based felicity conditions which surround its use (that is the speaker really wants the action to be carried out) and on hearer-based felicity conditions (that is that the hearer accepts

his or her role). Enriquez found that the pronoun was less likely to be present with the generic use of [TÚ]; this is doubtless due to its personalizing function of drawing attention to the protagonist of an act. In example 31 the inclusion of the contrastive pronouns *yo* and *tú* eliminated the potential for a generic interpretation but fulfilled the politeness function of including speaker and hearer in the activities detailed. In example 32 the absence of the pronoun allowed the generic interpretation to coexist with the specific one, protecting both the face of the speaker and the hearer.

In Chapter 1.2.3 we examined the conventionalized request 'Can/could you pass the salt?' where the use of 'can' enabled the hearer to refuse the request on the grounds of lack of ability rather than lack of cooperation, thus protecting the face of both speaker and hearer by serving as a hedge on the illocutionary force of the verb. There were frequent examples of hedged directives in the data. For example:

- (33) (MD) y después... el tema laboral... lo que sí *puedes*
preguntarle al alcalde en la rueda de prensa también es
qué pasa con el convenio colectivo

Here, not only is the emphasis shifted on to ability rather than willingness, but with the addition of the emphatic *sí* (what you CAN ask the mayor), there is the

implicature that PF has requested permission to ask this very question. Thus in using this form MD pays attention to PF's face by assuming that he was going to ask this question anyway and he protects his own against rejection of this command by being in a position to claim that he was merely giving permission.

Similarly, MD's frequent use of *tener que* (to have to) raises the question of the source of command.

- (34) (MD) *si en previsiones lo tienes que... lo tienes que dar pero ya mañana lo controlamos desde aquí*

Thus MD has extended the range of possible sources for this particular directive from himself alone, through the job specification to the generalized anyone (anyone in this situation would have to do this).

A still more indirect way grammatically of formulating directives while using second person reference to direct them at H is to subordinate the directive to another main verb as in the example below:

- (35) (MD) *si que conviene que mañana por la mañana... ahora ya no... le(s) des un telefonazo a los de la Diputación*

Here, as with *poder*, the impersonal verb *convenir* shifts emphasis away from the task itself (to make a telephone

call) to whether it is appropriate to do it or not. Spanish syntax places the subordinated verb in the subjunctive mood, the mood of non-factivity, thus increasing the degree of remoteness of the action. Impersonal verbs will be considered further in 6.3.7.

In this subsection on directives the relationship between second person reference and the directive function was considered. The imperative form was seen to be used as an attention-getter and also in requests and demands which imposed little on the face of H or which were effectively in H's interest. Jussive utterances were examined, a syntactic structure based on the subjunctive which systemically encodes indirectness and it was seen how this form can be used to defocus or even delete the agent. The presence of the pronoun in declarative directives was examined and it was suggested that the absence of the pronoun favoured a generic reading which could coexist with a specific one and provide face-protection for speaker and hearer. Where the pronoun was present this could respond to motivations of politeness; for example where a speaker wanted to emphasise equality of treatment between speaker and hearer. Finally, there was an examination of a further level of syntactic indirectness introduced by verbs and particles which hedge the illocutionary force of the directive.

(iii) Generic use of [TU]

Subsection 4.3.2 (ii) examined various lexical and syntactic markers which could point towards a generic or indefinite interpretation of the pronoun and those which might point towards a specific interpretation. However, like Lavandera (1982) below, we argued that it is extra-linguistic markers which point most strongly to a given interpretation. Furthermore, it was argued that while one value of the reference may predominate, it is the presence of more than one possible interpretation which provides protection for the face of the speaker, the hearer or both. It is this view that constitutes one of the main differences between the perspective of this study and the detailed and perceptive analysis of Spanish pronominal reference carried out by Haverkate (1984).

In her quantitative studies, Enriquez (1984:348) has dealt with specific and what she calls 'generalizing' reference separately (although she does not state the criteria which have enabled her to arrive at these definitions). In our data, it was found that, even taking all known extra-linguistic factors into consideration, as in French, a number of occurrences could equally be classified as specific or generic. For example:

- (36) (AH) lo que ocurre es que a niveles de staff... a niveles de puestos directivos... a niveles de cualificación por ejemplo... cuando *hablas* de profesores universitarios la proporción sigue siendo francamente mínima francamente mínima...

Taken out of its textual context, the generic value of *hablas* after *cuando* which can mean 'whenever' as well as 'when', could appear to be the predominant value. However, AH is answering the direct question *¿cuál es el porcentaje de mujeres profesoras?* Therefore his response, *cuando hablas de profesores universitarios la proporción sigue siendo francamente mínima...*, could be anaphoric, relating back to his colleague's question. Thus both interpretations are present in the utterance and a hearer may select one or other or both simultaneously. It is in cases such as this that classification into specific and generic reference is problematic.

Leaving aside, for the moment, such problems of classification, Enriquez has shown that in the data she examined the personal pronoun *tú* is considerably less likely to be present when the second person singular was used for generalizations.

Lavendera (1982) is interested in the generalizing function of *vos-usted* (*vos* is the Buenos Aires equivalent of *tú*) and examines the Spanish indefinite pronoun *uno* to see whether it is interchangeable with the personal

pronouns *vos/usted*. She thus provides, in her qualitative study, a number of insights into the functioning of *vos/usted*. The main difference she finds between these two forms is that 'While all instances of *uno* have a 'generalized' meaning signalled morphologically, only those instances of *vos* or *usted* have it that take it from the interactional context'. Thus she eliminates a number of lexical and syntactic markers (adverbs, tense, etc.) as being pointers towards a generalizing or indefinite interpretation. She starts with the premise that the hearer will interpret the personal pronoun in a specific sense but 'when there is an incongruity between that shared knowledge (of the speaker and the hearer), and the content of the *vos-usted* utterance, the *vos-usted* utterance is interpreted as being used in the figurative sense'. Unlike Enriquez, she does allow for the possibility that both values may be present in the utterance, indeed she claims that the specific value must be present if it is to lead to the incongruity which suggests indefiniteness. However, once the generalizing value has been arrived at, its presence would seem to invalidate the specific one. She gives the example:

Sólo pensar que es una prueba, chau, ya parece que se te nublara todo,
y no podés contestar nada

and goes on to comment that 'the unacceptability of the

interpretation vos-usted is being addressed to the actual listener, which determines the 'indefinite' reading, is the reasonable assumption that the speaker would not dare, outside a quarrel, make such a statement about the listener to his face'. This may be true in the majority of cases. However, both values could very easily be present in a situation where the speaker wanted to undermine the listener and protect his or her own face by the presence of the generalizing value of vos.

Both Lavandera and Haverkate find that Spanish does not parallel French insofar as the use of [TÚ] has a greater personalizing function vis-a-vis its alternatives of [SE] and [UNO] than [TU//VOUS] vis-a-vis [ON].

A third value which may be present when [TÚ] is used is that of the speaker him or herself. Traditional theories of the generalizing use of [TÚ/VD.] are discussed in Haverkate (1984:93) who finds the views of traditional grammarians such as Bobes Naves and Llorente Maldonado restrictive. Bobes Naves (1971:33) states '*El llamado TÚ impersonal es muchas veces en realidad una variante del YO*' (what is called the impersonal TÚ is often really a variant of YO) and Llorente Maldonado (1977:114) argues that '*el que habla, a pesar de utilizar la segunda persona, se implica en la cuestión*' (the speaker, in spite of using the second person, is implied in the matter).

Haverkate argues that speakers using this form are also aiming at establishing solidarity with their hearers.

In the following extract (*Camino a Castilla*, Module 1) a junior reporter (in an interview) is asked to describe how she goes about her work. What is interesting is how her account moves between *yo* and *tú*.

- (37) (EM) pues mira... generalmente los reportajes que *hago* son noticias que ocurren en el día... no son reportajes intemporales porque esos llevan una preparación distinta... entonces cuando por la mañana *sabes* que se convoca una manifestación de estudiantes o... vamos una cosa similar pues *te informas* un poco del tema... *miras*... vamos *yo* por lo menos pues *miro* si ha pasado en días anteriores... pues *miro* a ver qué causas tienen para manifestarse... quiénes son... *me entero* un poco de lo que voy a hacer y después *me dirijo* al... al lugar de los hechos y *hablo* con los protagonistas... *procuro* hablar con todas las partes posibles para tener todas las versiones posibles de los hechos y... en el caso concreto de televisión... lo que hay que hacer es estar muy pendiente en ruedas de prensa o en manifestaciones que *consigues* de algún personaje o así *tienes* que estar pendiente...

The reporter begins by introducing the type of reports she is generally (*generalmente*) responsible for, referring to herself with the first person form (*hago*). This and our knowledge of her role, lead us to interpret her use of the second person form as referring to her in particular as well as being a generic use. Her repair *miras... vamos yo por lo menos miro* (you look, well I, at least, look) has the effect of cancelling a possible generic reading of the second person pronoun, and establishing that she is indeed speaking about her own personal experience. She then

continues to use the first person form with the next six verbs before moving back to the second person.

One reason why she may have opted to put on record the fact that she is talking about her own experience is that she may feel that this is not great enough to base generalizations upon. She is therefore protecting her positive face against accusations of presumption on her part for presenting her experience as a general one. Once she has established that she is indeed talking from her own experience she reverts to the use of [TÚ] which enables her to appeal to solidarity with her hearer with [TÚ] serving here a positive politeness function similar to that suggested by Haverkate above.

In other examples, a variety of interpretations may coexist and be said to serve the interests of politeness. In the following extract a lecturer is discussing the problems of overcrowding in the Spanish University system:

- (38) (BR) *tú llegas a clase... entonces en la clase hay de los trescientos alumnos que tienes inscritos... pues normalmente vienen ciento cincuenta ciento sesenta... tú llegas a la clase das tu clase y te vas*

Here, it is the knowledge that the situation BR describes is one he has personally experienced and not one that the interviewer has experienced which lead to the interpretation of *tú* as referring to the speaker. However,

the other two values of specific reference to the second person and generalized reference are still available. The generalized reference adds weight to this personal experience, protecting the speaker from having the importance of his experience evaluated according to his perceived importance. The specific reference to the hearer, emphasised by the presence of one possessive and two subject pronouns, effects what Brown and Levinson (1987:118) call a 'point-of-view operation' where the deictic centre of the utterance is now the hearer. The speaker assumes that the hearer's experience is the same as his or her own. This strategy falls within their superstrategy of positive politeness as it is designed to pay attention to the hearer's positive face.

In our data we found a number of similar occurrences which included the use of the personal pronoun. For example, EM is describing the process of recording newsreel:

- (39) (EM) entonces *tienes que* contar bueno con conseguir una
imágenes que vayan de acuerdo con la información que *tú*
estás realizando
- (40) (EM) entonces *llegas* al lugar donde *tú* vas a... a grabar las
imágenes que *tienes*...

It is interesting that where there is a value of generalization the presence of the pronoun cannot be due to emphasis or contrast (for generalization precisely implies that everyone's experience is the same). Therefore

is plausible that it is due to some other motivation. that is the need to pay attention to the face of the speaker and hearer. In terms of politeness theory, this can be explained by the 'point-of-view operation' described above, whereby the speaker adopts a positive politeness strategy to appeal to solidarity with a hearer.

That the value of self-reference of the second person is strong may be evident in the following three examples where the speakers (BR, a lecturer in law and EM a reporter and Open University student), after previously using the second person to refer to personal experience, use an alternative way of expressing generalizations to talk about a hypothetical situation they have not experienced directly:

- (41) (BR) es imposible porque entonces *uno tendría que ser* tutor de aproximadamente cuatro cientos estudiantes
- (42) (BR) y entonces el problema es que la enseñanza se ha deteriorado hasta el punto de convertirse en... bueno en una labor que prácticamente *se podría* hacer mediante la utilización de vídeos
- (43) (EM) y si *se suspenden* esos exámenes hay otra posibilidad en septiembre.

These examples above show that the reference to the speaker is an important element in those uses of the second person where specific hearer reference does not predominate. Speakers can be seen to be aware of this

meaning and to allude to it in interaction. This would provide an explanation for the choice of the alternative forms of generalization discussed above.

In this subsection, the difficulties in assigning a given use of [TÚ] to a purely generic interpretation were discussed. In an utterance which allowed a generic interpretation there were three main values of [TÚ]: speaker reference, hearer reference and generic reference. It was argued that, on occasion, speakers could become aware of these competing values and use repair to eliminate or modify an undesired interpretation. The generic value allowed speakers to present their personal experience as a general rule: however the presence of the speaker in the reference meant that this rule would be judged on the basis of the perceived experience of the speaker. That reference to the speaker was an important value in the interpretation of [TÚ] could be seen from that fact that speakers could choose to change to an impersonal form when talking about a general experience they had not known personally. The presence of hearer reference in [TÚ] could function as a positive politeness mechanism effecting a point of view shift from speaker to hearer. This could be strengthened by the inclusion of the personal pronoun which highlighted the values of speaker and hearer.

6.3.4 [VD.] [VDS.] [VOSOTROS/AS]

In our data there was no use of the V form in Spanish nor was there any second person plural reference given the nature of the speech events recorded. In this section, therefore, we shall briefly review the systemic potential of these forms and examine some of the literature which deals with them.

In Spanish the polite second person pronoun is *usted/Vd.* (plural *ustedes/Vds.*) which is derived from a contraction of *Vuestra(s) Merced(es)* ('Your Mercy/ies'). Thus, from a historical and grammatical point of view it might be said not to be a true personal pronoun but rather an honorific. The V form is accompanied by the third person of the verb. Therefore, when the pronoun is absent there is a systemic ambiguity between second and third person reference which produces indirectness. Brown and Levinson (1987:23) argue that the substitution of third person for second person is widespread throughout the world, and that it encodes deference by use of a motivated form. They argue, furthermore, that honorifics are frozen conversational implicatures and indeed, the pronoun *usted* in Spanish is a text-book example of 'the diachronic development of addressee honorifics from referent honorifics'.

In Enriquez's review of literature on pronominal reference she points out that the occurrence of the second person polite pronoun has been found to be higher than for any other in a number of studies (Barrenechea y Alonso (1973), Cantero (1978), Cifuentes 1980), Ejarque (1977), Rosengren (1974)) and is even higher in her own (1984:348). Why might this be the case? Leaving aside the inclusion of the pronoun to resolve questions of ambiguity (which might more easily account for high occurrences in corpora derived from written sources, for example, Rosengren) which, can, as in the case of [ON] (see Chapter 5), in the vast majority of cases be resolved by context, it may be that politeness can provide an explanation. When a speaker and hearer use reciprocal [TÚ] they have put on record an expression of solidarity and thereby engage in positive politeness. The use of reciprocal [VD.] encodes both distance and deference. It may be that speakers feel that the use of the third person verb ending on its own encodes distance to a greater extent than it does deference. If this were the case, then the use of the pronoun [VD.] may enable the speaker to pay more attention to the face of the hearer, attention which otherwise would have been paid by the choice of [TÚ]. This is another area where further research into naturally-occurring data may be fruitful.

The singular [VD.] can be used for generic reference (but not the plurals [VDS.] and [VOSOTROS/AS]). Thus the plural

forms in Spanish are considerably more determinate than the French [VOUS] which can encode singular and plural, specific and generic reference. Enríquez (1984:146) observes that a speaker who uses the [VD.] form with an interlocutor, may use the [TÚ] form for generic reference especially when this concerns a personal experience of the speaker. From this she draws the conclusion that it is likely that '*los usos generalizadores no se sienten tan cerca al oyente como podría parecer a primera vista*' (generalizing uses are not felt to be as close to the hearer as might appear at first sight).

In this subsection it was noted that in the principal quantitative studies of pronominal use, the presence of the V form was particularly high. One possible explanation of this, according to politeness theory, would be that while the reciprocal use of the T verbal form encodes solidarity between speakers the use of the V form without the pronoun may merely encode distance. The use of the V pronoun then, may serve as a marker of deference or of appreciation of the hearer's face.

6.3.5 [UNO/A]

Subsection 6.2.7 described the usage of [UNO/A] which is summed up by María Moliner (1988:1420):

Se emplea como sujeto indefinido de un verbo usado en forma impersonal representando a una persona cualquiera, que puede ser o es precisamente la misma que habla

It is used as an indefinite subject of a verb used impersonally and is used to refer to 'anyone'; this 'anyone' may be or is the speaker him or herself

[UNO/A] has been studied in relation to other impersonals (García, 1975 in relation to *se* and Lavandera, 1982 in relation to *vos-usted*). Lavandera's extremely subtle qualitative study demonstrates that while *uno* and *vos-usted* are interchangeable in terms of truth conditions, the same cannot be said in terms of style. Morphologically *uno* signals indefiniteness and it becomes 'personalized' by its environment. Thus, she argues that, unlike the *tú-usted* pronouns examined earlier, the primary semantic value of *uno* is one of generalization and it acquires specific reference through interactional context. This could be an explanation of why BR in example (41) in subsection 4.3.2 (iii) switches from from [TÚ] to [UNO] when describing a hypothetical situation (in which nonetheless he might find himself, were circumstances to change sufficiently).

Lavandera (1982:10-11) supports the view expressed by Moliner above that the pronoun is most frequently used to refer to the speaker but may also refer to the hearer or a third party. The range of reference is less determinate than that of [TÚ/VD.] and thus its potential, it seems,

for negative politeness is wider. What it does not contain is any morphological specific reference to either speaker or hearer; thus, unlike [TU], it cannot be used to pay attention to H's face and therefore enjoys no potential, in itself, for hearer-oriented positive politeness.

However, if we accept Suardiaz's argument (in Haverkate 1984:100) that the gender of the hearer may influence the woman speaker's choice between [UNA] and [UNO] (where she is more likely to use the non-gender inflected [UNO] when talking with a man), it can be argued that the value of hearer-reference can be influence the use of this pronoun.

The potential of [UNO/A], for negative politeness seems much more promising as it appears to be the case that a speaker can use it to refer to personal experience more directly than would be possible with [SE] while at the same time, as Haverkate states (1984:97), 'make a general claim for the individual view he/she wishes to put forward'. Yet, in using [UNO/A], there is not the potential for the speaker to predicate this experience of the hearer to the same extent as it would be through [TÚ/VD.]. Let us take one of the examples already discussed as an alternative to the generalizing use of [TU] in 6.3.3 (iii) and provide its semantic equivalents in terms of genericity in order to examine their range of semantic determinacy:

- a) si se suspenden esos exámenes (no reference to S or H)
- b) si uno suspende esos exámenes (possible reference to S)
- c) si suspendes esos exámenes (possible reference to S and H))

It was argued, in the case of [ON] (5.1.4), that a speaker may choose to eliminate, by repair, an unwanted potential implication of the use of this pronoun. It is possible that this may be a consideration for speakers when they choose a form of generalizing reference. For example, assuming that to fail one's exams is face-threatening to some of those for whom this is a possibility or a reality, it is conceivable that a speaker may want to avoid b) and c) where it is possible that the specific value could be interpreted as relevant. For example, a speaker sensitive to the potential threat to the positive face of a hearer who has just failed exams, may, if he or she chooses to raise the topic at all, prefer for example, a) or b).

In this subsection we saw how [UNO/A] encodes no semantic reference to either speaker or hearer although it is often used to refer to the speaker. This can allow the speaker both a degree of face protection and weight for his or her assertions which are raised to the status of general rules (as well as having their validity measured by that of the speaker). [UNO/A], compared with the other pronouns

available for generic reference in Spanish, is more personal than [SE] (as it is used always to refer to human agency and potentially to the speaker) and is less personal than [TÚ/VL.] which includes the hearer and potentially the speaker.

6.3.6 [SE]

[SE] has provided a fertile ground for researchers (Zorraquino (1979), García (1975), Babcock (1970), etc.) on account of its grammatical complexity (see 6.2.8).

The impersonal use of [SE], unlike the passive use, is not what Brown and Levinson (1987:274) call an 'impersonal passive' where they argue that the basic motive for these is agent deletion and not object promotion but rather a passive '*con se*'. Molina Redondo (1974:26-27) gives the following definition: '*en ellas se indica la existencia de un agente humano subyacente que, en caso de ser expresado en la oración, asumiría la función de sujeto*' (here the existence of an underlying human agent is marked which, were it to be expressed in the utterance, would assume the subject function). Thus, [SE] is more determinate, insofar as it attracts attention to the absence of an agent, than truly impersonal constructions such as *hay que hacer esto*.

The approach in this study has been to deal with all the values of a pronoun which are grammatically available and then to investigate how its degree of indeterminacy might be exploited in the interests of politeness. So while it is essentially the impersonal use of [SE] which is of interest, this use may be overlaid with other values available within the paradigm.

It is this multiplicity of functions which makes [SE] potentially more indeterminate than the other impersonal pronoun [UNO/A]. Like [UNO/A] it can be used for both generalized and specific reference. However, unlike [UNO/A] it does contain the potential for the deletion of the agent. Nonetheless, [SE] is more determinate, insofar as it may attract attention to the absence of an agent, than constructions such as *hay que hacer esto*.

Haverkate (1984:102) refers to the specific value of [SE] as 'nongeneralizing pseudo-reflexive reference' and observes that it can serve a speaker's interactional strategy of avoiding a direct confrontation with the hearer. He examines argumentative strategies in written texts; strategies which seek to avoid the speaker or the hearer losing face; and those which serve to make explicit the superior position of the speaker with respect to the hearer (he gives the example (1984:105) *;Por la puerta se va a calle!* which requires a precise context for it to be

interpreted in the way described above (3)). His first category appears to be a subsection of his second and all three categories fall within politeness theory and provide some perceptive insights into the potential of [SE] as an interactional resource. What Haverkate does not consider is the possible presence of multiple interpretations. Furthermore, the context of his (generally confected) utterances is only inferable from the interpretation he gives it. In the following extracts we shall investigate the use of [SE] in naturally-occurring data.

In the following extract from the discussion between the two newsreporters, Juan Ballesterro (JB) and Francisco Fernández (FF) about the inclusion of an article on a local strike, both speakers use the impersonal pronoun [SE].

(44) (JB) ... entonces no sé si podemos ya prever un hueco para los sucesos...

(FF) sí yo creo que *se puede* (1) (ver) algo... si quieres lo hacemos así... la damos en la ocho...

(JB) podemos dejar media página seguro aunque no salga... es decir...

(FF) sí *se puede* (2) *dar* media página con una foto... o incluso algo menos si es posible ya te digo con esa idea de ampliarlo al día siguiente... todos los términos de... mas concretos de lo que ha sido el convenio si es que ha sido firmado y si no *se ha firmado* (3) ...

(JB) bueno tú de todas formas la base la tienes ¿no? de días anteriores...

(FF) claro sí sí.

(JB) entonces si *se firma* (4) seria mas o menos como la última propuesta de la empresa...

(FF) si

(JB) o sea que esta propuesta *se puede dar* (5) quiero decir que la media página está segura ¿no?

(FF) sí la media página siempre está segura sí incluso con alguna foto o así *se puede dar* (6)...

(JB) entonces la marcamos así y a sucesos podemos dejar las dos columnas de abajo...

Of the six occurrences of the pronominal [SE] above (all of which allow a passive and an impersonal interpretation) contextual factors (knowledge of roles of JB and FF) eliminate the interpretation of two of these as referring to the participants in the discussion. These are (3) and (4) (*si no se ha firmado* and *si se firma*), both of which refer to the collective agreement and indirectly to those who are responsible for signing it. All of the remaining four occurrences could refer to JB and FF and relate to an interim solution to their problem.

It is interesting to examine occurrences (1) and (2) of [SE] which both parallel JB's use of the first person plural.

(45) (JB) ...no sé si *podemos* ya prever un hueco...

(FF) sí yo creo que *se puede* ver (1) algo... si quieres lo hacemos así... lo damos en la ocho...

(46) (JB) *podemos* dejar media página...

(FF) sí *se puede dar* (2) media página

In example (45) FF has interpreted JB's expression of doubt as a yes/no question and reiterates JB's proposition but chooses not to parallel JB's use of the first person plural to refer to the compromise, using first the impersonal [SE] and then prefacing his use of [NOSOTROS] with the hedge *si quieres* which makes the proposed course of action contingent on JB's agreement. It was already argued in 6.3.2 that for a speaker to use [NOSOTROS] to induce a hearer to some commitment could be seen as a positive politeness device when used by a speaker with enough power to achieve these ends by other means. The use of [SE] above (and the hedge on one potential implication of [NOSOTROS]) may allow FF, the less powerful speaker, to put forward an opinion while protecting his face against the possible accusation that he has overstepped his role and forced a decision.

In example (46) there is the same contrast between [NOSOTROS] and [SE]. In this interaction, as in (45), FF does not have the power to take decisions or to engage JB in any course of action. Thus his use of the impersonal/passive [SE] which is grammatically indeterminate, can only be interpreted by reference to context. It can be interpreted as a generalization ('anyone can'); a passive ('it is possible'), laying stress on the fact that the action is possible; or it can engage one or other or both of the speakers or a third

party on the proposed course of action ('X can'). This form therefore creates an interactional space even larger than that provided by [ON].

A similar range of reference can be seen in the following example where the senior newscaster Miguel de Dios is giving instructions to his junior:

- (47) (MD) y además como después habrá rueda de prensa del alcalde para explicar en qué ha consistido la... la historia ésta... pues bueno pues lo que tienes... lo que se hace es... *se cubre* todo esto... y entonces preparas como tres minutos para mañana... le dejas preparado a Pura una información para que....

What is interesting here is that MD has effected a repair, switching from the personal [TÚ] to the impersonal [SE].

It is possible that MD has become aware of the face-threatening potential of the coercive *lo que tienes (que hacer)* ('what you have (to do)') and seeks to reduce this.

The possible range of reference has now opened out to include not just the junior reporter but anyone in that situation (generalization) or more specifically, the junior reporter and others (possibly including his senior or a person or persons other than MD and his junior). In addition there is the passive interpretation whereby all agency is deleted altogether. Without knowing who exactly is responsible for what task it is not possible to make an interpretation of this particular use of [SE]. However, its potential for politeness, were MD in fact directing

his assistant to do something face-threatening, is considerable.

In this subsection it was shown how [SE], used in contexts where there is potential reference to an agent, can provide a greater degree of indeterminacy than the previous pronouns studied. That [SE] can derive from context the values of generic reference, personal specific reference and deletion of all reference allows speakers and hearers to create an interactional space which protects the face of both.

6.3.7 Impersonals

Many scholars (Beinhauer (1963), Haverkate (1984), Seco, 1967) mention the use of a noun or noun phrase as serving as a modesty formula to refer to the speaker. Seco (1967:42) states '*para la primera persona de modestia, tenemos un servidor, el que suscribe, el abajo firmante, el autor... Sólo la primera fórmula se usa en la lengua hablada, aunque va perdiendo prestigio*' (for the modest-first person, we have a servant, the subscriber, the undersigned, the author... Only the first of these is used in the spoken language, although it is falling out of use'). Brown and Levinson (1984:204) refer to this strategy under negative politeness as the use of 'reference terms

as 'I' avoidance' saying that 'the speaker distances himself as an individual from acts he would rather have attributed to the duties and rights of the office'.

These and other similar nouns and noun phrases, many of which are now archaisms, can be exploited for ironic purposes in the written language and their potential for face protection is evident in the following extract from the Spanish weekly magazine, *Cambio 16*, where the journalist ironically refers to himself as *este columnista* (this columnist) and *este escritor* (this writer/hack) to protect his face, in the first instance, against the face-threatening act of choosing the taboo title for the column, *Los hideputas* (The sons of bitches (archaic)) and in the second against that of his use of this epithet in referring to a senior Spanish politician. At a deeper level of analysis, he may also be indirectly alluding to the 'discourse of power' of those he is criticising:

Martín Prieto escribía hace algunos días en la última página de *Diario 16* una tímida defensa de Ludolfo Paramio, el miembro de la ejecutiva del PSOE que, en un mitín de Yecla, calificó a los periodistas españoles de "hijos de puta". Al igual que él, *este columnista* prefiere recurrir al vocablo cervantino para encabezar estas líneas, y pensar que mi viejo y entrañable amigo el Emepé, al igual que le ocurre con Guerra -aunque cada vez menos, porque gradualmente se va acercando a la opinión que, desde hace años, *este escritor* tiene del todavía número dos del PSOE...
Cambio 16 (13/5/91)

Haverkate (1984:59) attests the use of similar devices in the spoken language, mentioning particularly the use of

este cura for self-reference. This strategy is similar to that adopted on occasions by parents to children for purposes of control as in *te lo manda tu mamá*. There were no occurrences of this strategy in our data, indeed it is such a marked device that it would probably only be used ironically or where there is a marked power differential.

Much more common in our corpus was the use of impersonal verbs such as *hay que* (see Brown and Levinson 1987:191), the use of the infinitive of the verb with no personal reference which can be used as an imperative (see Butt and Benjamin 1988:255) or the raising of the object to subject position.

For example, in the following extract, JB, the senior reporter needs to know the probable length of an article his junior wants to submit in order to tell another colleague the space he can count on:

- (48) (JB) es que el redactor de sucesos tiene que saber pronto cuánto... cuánto tiene que escribir... *habría que decírselo...*

Knowledge of the role of the speaker tell us that it is probably the speaker who has to contact his colleague as soon as possible. Had JB used [Y0] this could have been face-threatening insofar as he would have implied that his junior is creating personal difficulties for him and not

respecting his face. Here the deletion of the agent through the use of an impersonal verb (and the use of the conditional tense) mitigates any such threat.

When the senior sports reporter uses the same verbal construction in extract (49), it is contextually more probable that she is referring to the hearer insofar as he is responsible for photograph searches:

(49) (F) sí claro luego *habrá que buscar* las fotos y luego en
función de la medida de cada una...

An impersonal verb allows her to give an indirect order: if challenged she can always assert that either she was going to search for the photographs herself or that she had not decided who would do so. Indeed the impersonal verb allows her to state that a certain task needs to be done; her junior can gain credit by offering to carry it out (which is what he does). Thus it is contextual evidence alone which is used to assign a human referent to an impersonal verb and then to assign a given referent.

A further use of impersonal verbs was already discussed in 6.3.3 where it was argued that a structure such as *conviene que hagas* shifted the focus from the action (and the agent) to the appropriacy of it being carried out. There are a number of impersonal verbs in Spanish which

allow varying degrees of linguistic indirectness depending on the syntactic structure selected. For example:

- (a) conviene hacer X (it is appropriate to do X)
- (b) conviene que hagas X (it is appropriate that you do X)
- (c) te conviene hacer X (it is appropriate for you to do X)

In example (a) all reference to the agent is deleted. In (b), while there is reference to the agent through the subordinate verb ending, the subjunctive mood is one of non-factivity. In example (c) the reference to the agent is through the indirect object pronoun. Thus all three constructions could provide a speaker with a resource for politeness.

The use of the infinitive as an imperative is gradually becoming accepted by grammars of Spanish and is used on two occasions by the same sports editor. In both examples it is interpreted as a first person plural imperative by the junior reporter:

- (50) (F) *dar una cita aqui*
(M) *aquí una cita metemos aquí una cita*
- (51) (F) *meter una foto del partido de uno de los dos partidos que jugaron aquí*
(M) *la metemos bien grande ¿no?*

In both these examples we know from the role of the speaker F that she has the final say in what is published on the sports pages. The use of the infinitive does not allow her to appeal to the positive politeness of the first person imperative *metemos*; it does allow her to avoid reference to either speaker or hearer.

The raising of an object to subject position has already been mentioned in 6.3.2. In the following extract the junior local reporter is arguing for his article to go into page five if an agreement is signed in time and accepting that it will go on page eight if not:

- (52) (FF) si se llegase a firmar el convenio yo creo que sí *podría ir* en la cinco porque sería la noticia más importante quizá del día... pero si no se firma pues es una más que *iría* en la página ocho de laboral

With the exception of the first person hedge *yo creo* there is no other personal reference in this extract: the *convenio* ('agreement') is the subject of *podría ir* and *iría*. Yet, as has already been argued (6.3.2), the decision lies in the hands of the senior editor. By eliminating all reference to speaker and hearer, FF is able to avoid confrontation with JB while at the same time avoiding implied agreement.

In this subsection we have seen how impersonal devices can function as a negative politeness resource described by Brown and Levinson (1987:190-194) which enables speakers to avoid the pronouns 'I' and 'you'. Thus speakers can indicate that they do not wish to impinge on their hearers while at the same time disassociating themselves from any potential FTA.

6.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was not to replicate the study of the French data (Chapters 4 and 5) but rather to examine the potential of the Spanish pronominal system for exploitation in the implementation of politeness strategies and to investigate whether this theory could contribute some explanation of one of the areas viewed as problematic by Spanish grammarians: the presence or absence of the subject personal pronoun (absence being the unmarked form with the exception of [VD./VDS.]).

It was noted that much research carried out into the area of pronominal reference in Spanish had been based on written texts or confected data and that quantitative investigations into naturally-occurring data suffered from two principal drawbacks from the point of view of this study. Firstly, they were all taken from the standard

interview format where the speakers were coded for social variables such as age and gender but not for role, status or purpose. Furthermore, these studies often quantified deictic and anaphoric reference together whereas this study is concerned with deictic reference alone. It has already been argued (Chapters 4 and 5) that the degree of indeterminacy of a personal (pronominal) reference can be exploited by a speaker for face protection in face-threatening situations or to pay attention to the face of the hearer. The corpus examined provided evidence of face-threatening activities and therefore provided data for a qualitative study of language use.

In the study of [Y0] (6.3.1), it was noted that traditional explanations for the presence of the pronoun were not particularly powerful. Some researchers had detected a particularly high occurrence of the pronoun with verbs relating to mental activity. These verbs could be related to the hedges identified in 4.1.3 - 4.1.5 which could be exploited by speakers in the interest of politeness. It was argued that the inclusion of the personal pronoun could be used as a further hedge on the first person hedge (much in the same way as *moi* was suggested to function in 4.1.2): its function as a strengthener or weakener would depend on contextual factors such as the role, status and purpose of the speaker. Researchers had also noted an increased use of the pronoun as the initial element of an

utterance. This presence could also be explained by politeness theory: the pronoun can serve a cohesive function by allowing a speaker to establish the relevance of his or her turn by referring to the speaker's role in the speech situation.

In the case of [NOSOTROS/AS] (6.3.1), the presence or absence of the pronoun was of less interest than the use of the form itself. Like [ON], [NOSOTROS/AS] could be used as a 'corporate we' enabling a speaker to draw support from an institution; dissociate his or her personal role from the institutional role in the case of a FTA; and include the hearer in any face-threatening activity as both agent and patient thus rendering any FTA more difficult to challenge as any attack would be against the institution itself. That the multiple values of [NOSOTROS/AS] as inclusive, exclusive and self-reference could be interpreted simultaneously was seen where speakers went on record to eliminate one of these. In particular, a less powerful speaker who used this form without feeling that he or she had the authority to do so may feel the need to engage in face-work to make this clear. The positive politeness potential of [NOSOTROS/AS], when used by a more powerful speaker to imply the inclusion of both speaker and hearer in an activity, not only paid attention to the positive face of the hearer but

also entailed any challenge by the hearer being directed at the speaker personally.

The presence and absence of the pronoun was of particular interest in the case of [TÚ] (6.3.3). Quantitative research had detected a higher use of the pronoun in contrastive and corroborative utterances. From the perspective of politeness theory this could be explained by a need, where there is reciprocal use of [TÚ]), to pay attention to the positive face of the hearer through putting on record the solidarity (through the T form) of the speaker with the hearer. In the case of corroborative utterances a speaker may want to foreground both speaker and hearer thereby emphasising common ground. In the case of contrastive utterances the speaker may want to put on record solidarity with (and respect for by emphasising the individuality of the other) the hearer before committing the FTA of disagreeing.

Given the nature of the data studied, there was considerable evidence that the [TÚ] form was being used in utterances serving the directive function. It was noted that the second person singular imperative form (which most closely corresponds to the directive function) was used for attention-getters and to request activities which were in the hearer's interest. 'Jussive utterances' provide a linguistically more indirect imperative through

displacing the source of the demand. Yet it is context which determines their illocutionary force. A further linguistic resource available for politeness also involves a displacement of the hearer, this time through the demotion of the hearer from subject to object position. In the data, the majority of directive acts were carried out through the declarative form. Indeed the use of [TÚ] without the pronoun could be seen to fulfill a politeness function: the alternative generic value could allow the utterance to be interpreted as a generalised statement rather than a directive aimed at a specific person (a personalising pronoun would draw too much attention to the recipient of the directive). Within this declarative form speakers would use a variety of subordinating hedges including the conventional *poder* and impersonals such as *convenir* to mitigate the force of the FTA.

The presence both of the specific and the generic values of [TÚ] in an utterance can provide a resource for politeness. Indeed a speaker can use this form for self-, hearer- and generic reference and may choose to go on record to modify an undesired interpretation. The generic value allowed speakers to present their own experience as a general rule and [TÚ], unlike the other resources available for generic reference ([SE] and [UNO/A]), allowed the speaker to effect a positive politeness point-of-view shift from speaker to hearer. This appeal to the

hearer, and implicit inclusion of both speaker and hearer in the activity, could be reinforced by the presence of the personal pronoun.

Given the nature of the corpus studied neither the V form nor the plural T form appeared in the data. It was noted that all these forms are more determinate than the French [VOUS] and that only the singular V form can be used as a generic. It was noted that the particularly high occurrence of the V pronoun noted by a number of scholars was generally attributed to disambiguation as well as conventional politeness. It was argued that disambiguation is unlikely to be a powerful explanatory factor in spoken interaction and that politeness was a more promising motivation. The V form, used reciprocally, encodes both distance and deference: speakers may feel that the verbal form alone encodes distance more than deference and therefore choose to pay attention to the face of the hearer through use of the pronoun.

Unlike [TU], [UNO/A] morphologically signals indefiniteness and becomes personalized by its environment. Since it is often used to refer to the speaker, it cannot be used for positive politeness to pay attention to the face of a hearer but rather allows the speaker a degree of support and face protection through claiming a personal experience to be a general one.

[SE] is the most indeterminate pronoun which can be used for generic reference insofar as this usage coexists with a specific usage and also a passive usage which eliminates all reference to agency altogether. Thus [SE] is systemically even more indeterminate than [ON] (see Chapter 5). Its potential for negative politeness, therefore, is considerable insofar as it enables speakers and hearers to create an interactional space which protects the face of both.

Impersonal devices also enable speakers to avoid direct reference to speaker and hearer and allow speakers to indicate that they do not wish to impinge on the hearer's negative face while at the same time disassociating themselves from any potential FTA.

Chapter 6 Notes

- (1) Enriquez (1984) has had recourse to materials produced by the '*Proyecto de estudio coordinado de la norma lingüística de las principales ciudades de Iberoamérica y de la Península Ibérica*' (Coordinated study project on the linguistic norm of the main cities of Spanish America and the Iberian Peninsula), see 1984:133.
- (2) Wilson (1940:336) in his account of *él* and *ella* as pronouns of address gives evidence that during the Spanish Golden Age, these third person pronouns were used as an intermediate solution for those wishing to use neither T nor V. He quotes Correa (1903) who attributes this usage, in most instances, to conventional politeness. However, he points out that this form can be used as well as T to show anger and disrespect by individuals who would normally use V.
- (3) Rather than analysing this use of [SE] in the way that Haverkate has done, it is perhaps more useful to consider it within the wider context of politeness theory. Should a speaker choose a degree of indirectness unwarranted by the differential power of speaker and hearer and the weight of the FTA, then this choice may become a FTA in itself. In this example the speaker is sufficiently powerful to use a direct form of address and yet has chosen the extremely indirect [SE]. A hearer, appealing to Gricean maxims, would attach a social significance to this choice and explain it in terms of the relationship between S and H; one of anger, disdain, superiority, etc..

CHAPTER SEVEN CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.0 Introduction

Given that detailed conclusions have already been provided for the analysis of the data so far (4.5, 5.5, 6.4), the aim of this conclusion is to summarise briefly the findings of this study; to relate to each other the findings about two distinct languages; to point towards the implications these might have for the teaching and learning of foreign languages; to evaluate some of the methodological difficulties encountered in the type of linguistic analysis employed; and to conclude by evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis as a whole.

7.1 Summary of findings

In short the findings of this thesis have been:

- that the context in which language is used is paramount to the interpretation of linguistic items which are essentially indexical such as pronominal reference and that it cannot be assumed that these items are 'tidily indexical of persons'. Furthermore, that it is essential to distinguish between those pronouns which are used for anaphoric reference (and which take their

interpretation primarily from the co-text) and those which are deictic (and take their interpretation primarily from the context).

- that the status, roles and goals of participants are crucial factors in the interpretation of speaker hearer reference. Furthermore, that these are factors which are hard to control and which often get overlooked in statistical analyses and therefore require qualitative analysis
- that naturally-occurring discourse contains a great deal of ambivalence in the interpretation of pronominal reference even for participants
- that this ambivalence is valuable to speakers and can be exploited particularly when there is threat to face. Furthermore, that a knowledge of politeness strategies is a further contextual indicator of the referent of a given pronominal reference.
- that conversely, the most determinate and contextually-explicit forms of speaker/hearer reference can be exploited to actively create and maintain interpersonal relationships.

- that the function of a given pronominal reference as a strengthener or a weakener is not located in its linguistic form but rather in the role and status of the user and in the use to which it is put.

7.2 Relationship between findings in French and Spanish

Quantitative studies showed that there was a particularly high occurrence of the most determinate reference, that of the first person singular, in the French data (4.0) and that, in Spanish (6.2.1), studies had shown that this category of reference attracted a particularly high occurrence of this personal pronoun. What emerged in both languages was the function of first person singular reference with verbs which acted as hedges (4.1.2) on the illocutionary force of the utterance. Three categories of hedges were identified: 'quality', 'attitude' and 'performative'. 'Quality' hedges allowed a speaker to express his or her degree of commitment to a given proposition. While Brown and Levinson had classified such hedges as strengtheners or weakeners primarily on the basis of linguistic factors, it was argued in this study (4.1.3) that it is extra-linguistic factors which determine firstly whether a hedge is to be interpreted as motivated by politeness (rather than for example, to limit criminal liability) and secondly whether it is a strengthener or a weakener. The extra-linguistic factors

which are most relevant in interpreting the function of the hedge are the role and status of the speaker and the weight of the face-threatening act. Speakers can use 'attitude' hedges (4.1.4) to strengthen or weaken their commitment to a proposition while at the same time paying attention to the face of the hearer. Finally, 'performative hedges' (4.1.5), a category predicted by Brown and Levinson to be intrinsically face-threatening and therefore relatively unlikely to occur, appear to provide a productive linguistic resource in French and Spanish, enabling speakers to reduce threat to the face of the hearer; this is achieved by using a performative to put on record an act less threatening than that implied by the entire utterance; furthermore, performatives allow a speaker to assert his or her authority within a speech event. The particle *moi* in French (4.1.2) and the presence of the pronoun *yo* in Spanish (6.2.1) can in turn act as a hedge on the first person reference, a hedge which is judged to be a strengthener or a weakener on the basis of extra-linguistic factors. Furthermore, the first person pronoun can be used as the initial element of a turn to establish the right of the speaker to participate.

The first person plural category is more important in Spanish than in French where this function has been taken over, in the main, by the pronoun [ON]. The indeterminacy afforded by this form (inclusive-, exclusive- and self-

reference) enables it to be used for positive politeness including both speaker and hearer in a given act. While a more powerful speaker can pay attention to the face of the hearer by implying shared responsibility and authority, the use of this form renders a FTA more difficult to challenge: the speaker can be seen to be challenging his or her relationship with the hearer and, where the 'corporate we' is implied, challenging the institution of which he or she is part. Thus hearers who wish to dissociate themselves from an inclusive interpretation of this form often engage in face-work in order to do so. This is also the case with speakers who do not feel that they have the authority to use this form.

The use of the T form is more important in the Spanish data where all speakers use this form for address. The T form can be used in both languages for both specific and generic reference: however, while linguistic factors might suggest a generic interpretation, this can be confirmed or denied by extra-linguistic factors. Indeed, in many occurrences of this pronoun, both interpretations are available and can be exploited for the purpose of politeness. In Spanish, the inclusion of the pronoun in specific reference (both in corroborative and contrastive uses (6.3.3. (i))) can serve to pay attention to the face of the hearer in discussion. This appeal to solidarity is also apparent in the French data (4.3.2 (i)). The generic

use of this pronoun in both languages (as well as the V form) allows speakers to present personal experience as a general rule: thus there are three interpretations, self-reference, hearer-reference and generic reference. Thereby, on the one hand, this form allows a point-of-view shift to the hearer (positive politeness) through its specific value and, on the other, protects the face of the speaker against challenge through its generic value; any challenge is to a general rule and not to the speaker alone. The value of self-reference allows speakers who normally use the V form with their hearers to use the T form in generic utterances with the positive politeness dividend of appealing to solidarity. Furthermore, in Spanish, the inclusion of the pronoun in potentially generic utterances can serve the same purpose. Finally, in Spanish, the exclusion of the pronoun in face-threatening utterances, such as directives, where, contextually, the most salient interpretation is that of specific reference, can mitigate threat to face insofar as both a specific and a generic interpretation are available. In Spanish the plural T form can only be used for specific reference.

In French the V form proves a more important resource for politeness than the Spanish V form insofar as it can be used for singular and plural, specific and generic reference. Indeed, this pronoun, in group discussion, allows an 'out' for both speakers and hearers for it is up

to the hearers to decide whether this reference is addressed to them or to a group (including them) or is used for generic reference. Such judgements are dependent on contextual factors. In Spanish, quantitative studies have shown that there is a high occurrence of personal pronouns with the V form. It was argued that disambiguation is less important as an explanatory factor than conventional politeness. In a reciprocal V relationship the use of the form without the pronoun might primarily signify distance: the presence of the pronoun pays attention to the face of the hearer. The plural V form can only be used for specific reference.

The 'impersonal' pronoun [ON] gives the greatest insight into how speakers can exploit indeterminacy of reference for the purposes of politeness. This pronoun, more than any other in French, gains its referential meaning through context and one of the aims of Chapter 5 was to investigate those elements of context (primarily roles and status) which are most relevant in assigning a given interpretation. It was shown that despite its indeterminacy, speakers and hearers do not appear to have difficulties in assigning a given referent to a use of [ON] and that this is done more on the basis of extra-linguistic than purely linguistic variables. That speakers are aware that there can be conflicting interpretations of the pronoun current in the discourse became evident when

they chose to dissociate themselves from one or more interpretations of the pronoun. As in the case of the first person plural, as well as the personal 'we', speakers were able to use [ON] to exploit not only the 'personal we' (for positive politeness) but also the 'corporate we' to draw on the implied authority of an institution and to thereby render a FTA more difficult to challenge. Speakers can also use the generic value of [ON] to present a FTA as a general rule or principle, thereby dissociating themselves from the act. A further value is one of impersonalisation insofar as the use of [ON] can also imply that the referent is not relevant: this allows both speakers and hearers to distance themselves from a given FTA. The multiplicity of potentially concurrent interpretations of [ON] creates an interactional space for speakers and hearers where they feel that clarity can be sacrificed in the interests of politeness.

While in French *tu/vous* and *on* compete for the generic function, in Spanish this is shared between *tú/Vd.*, *uno/a* and *se*. It was argued that while the T/V forms can allow speakers to appeal to the hearer's positive (T) or negative (V) face, [UNO/A] (6.2.7) can be used to present the speaker's experience as a general rule without necessarily predicating it on the hearer and [SE] (6.2.8) allows for a much greater degree of indeterminacy insofar as one of its potential values permits the deletion of the

agent. Indeed this is the function of many of the impersonals (5.4, 6.3.7) examined which allow speakers to dissociate themselves from the force of a FTA.

7.3 Implications for foreign-language learning

The implications of these results for learners of a foreign language are extremely important. Not only do learners need to acquire socio-cultural knowledge about the status, roles and goals of speaker and the weight of different face-threatening acts in a different culture, they need to be able to use and interpret the linguistic resources of the foreign language for their own purposes.

In the case of French, not only do learners need to be aware of the full potential of [ON] (a pronoun which does not have an equivalent in English or Spanish) but they also need to be aware of the elements of context which allow them both to use and interpret it successfully.

Indeed [ON] is a linguistic resource which, if sensitively used, can form part of a student's 'strategic competence' (Canale, 1983) enabling them, for example to postpone any decisions about the use of V or T. Recent research (Péry-Woodley, 1991) has shown that learners of French as a foreign language have considerable difficulties in handling this form appropriately in written texts; it is

doubtless true that such difficulties also exist in the spoken language.

In the case of Spanish, the blanket warning given to students on statistical grounds to avoid the use of the personal pronoun in Spanish except in cases of contrast, emphasis and disambiguation needs to be reconsidered. In particular, the use of the pronouns [YO] and [TÚ/VD.] have an important role to play in the negotiation and maintenance of social relations. Indeed a learner who unintentionally fails to put on record solidarity or deference through the appropriate use of the T/V pronouns, may well speak grammatically flawless Spanish but will have presented an attitude other than that intended. Furthermore, a learner will need to distinguish between the discursive effects of using the [NOSOTROS/AS] form with its potential for positive politeness and using a more impersonal form such as [SE] which can serve the ends of negative politeness.

7.4 Methodological difficulties

One major difficulty with the type of linguistic analysis adopted in this study is the subjectivity of the analyst's interpretation. For the analyst, as observer and auditor, can only intuit the knowledge actually brought to bear by participants when they speak and interpret in a context of

utterance. This problem becomes particularly acute when dealing with linguistic items which are used for deixis and which therefore depend a great deal for their reference on extra-linguistic context. An example of this can be found on page 316 where at least three interpretations of the first person plural form *podemos* can be offered. Which interpretations are salient for the participants in the speech situation can only be known for certain by the participants themselves although in many cases the likely interpretation may be apparent. Furthermore, in attempting to investigate the paradigmatic choices available to a speaker, the analyst has no other option than to make assumptions about the motivation for a given choice of pronoun, i.e. that a speaker has chosen, say, *podemos* instead of an impersonal 'equivalent', and then, in the event of this choice being used in a face-threatening context, that these motivations may be accounted for by a desire to implement politeness strategies.

The issue of the extent to which the use of language itself creates a context and the extent to which it is that context which determines interpretation also gave rise to difficulties. It was shown (4.1.3) that the function of a hedge as a strengthener or a weakener depended on the perceived quality of the speaker. Yet it was also shown that a less powerful speaker in terms of

status within a speech event could use, say, performative hedges (4.1.5) to draw on authority and to speak 'powerfully'. Assessments of the relative 'power' of a speaker are necessarily subjective evaluations although there may be a high degree of intersubjectivity in groups which share an ethos. It is the job of the analyst to attempt to share the intersubjectivity of the participants of the speech event.

Finally, there is the problem of deciding whether the use of indeterminacy should be accounted for by a desire to implement politeness strategies or whether it is better accounted for by some other factor such as, for example, imprecision of knowledge or linguistic sloppiness. Given that a major politeness strategy is to render FTAs indeterminate, for example, to make an order appear as a suggestion, then it follows that the hearer or analyst cannot assert that the suggestion was ever intended as anything other than just that. Indeed, the whole difficulty of identifying the relevant illocutionary force of a given utterance or sequence of utterances gives the analyst no alternative but to base interpretation on hearer's responses and to supplement this by a subjective approach.

Thus the problem at the root of all the difficulties outlined above is a lack of access to a speaker's actual

intentions at the moment of utterance, even assuming that these are clear and could be articulated. These problems are inherent in all those types of linguistic analysis which seek to investigate what people actually 'do' with language. One way of circumventing them has been to use confected data (where there is the possibility of specifying relevant aspects of context). However, the aim of the present study has been to investigate naturally-occurring spoken language in context and therefore it was felt that the approach adopted in this study was appropriate in light of the richness of the data obtained.

7.5 Concluding remarks

The main strength of this study is that it has tested a body of theoretical knowledge, that is, politeness theory, against corpora of naturally-occurring data in two Romance languages. It has shown that politeness theory can provide a powerful explanation for elements of the use of personal pronominal reference in both these languages. Furthermore a knowledge of these strategies can form part of the extra-linguistic knowledge speakers and hearers draw on when carrying out and interpreting FTAs. The application of politeness theory to the data suggested that a number of refinements could be made to the theory: for example, a revaluation of the importance of the extra-linguistic context in the case of the assessment, say, of hedges as

strengtheners and weakeners. Furthermore, we have tried to show that there is a danger of constructing an ethnocentric view of linguistic politeness. Brown and Levinson saw a universal strategy in the deletion of performative hedges: yet these provide a productive resource for linguistic politeness in French and also in Spanish (the language and culture of which are not too distantly related to English). Thus the line between what is universal and what is culturally-specific within politeness theory will need to be redrawn as more empirical studies are carried out into different languages and cultures.

The possible weakness of studies of this kind, as was argued above (7.4), lies the inability of the analyst to gain access to the intentions of the speaker and the consequent danger of circularity in the argument. For while politeness theory can provide an adequate explanation of a number of features of language use (for example, the use of *on* to imply a 'corporate we'), it is also a knowledge of politeness strategies which can enable a hearer to retrieve a face-threatening intent from a given use of language (for example, a hearer will know that a speaker wishes to maintain a relationship and therefore will interpret a suggestion as a directive). This problem is recognised and every attempt has been made, in this study, to make as explicit as possible, the

assumptions on which interpretations have been made. Furthermore, where there are multiple interpretations available these have been made explicit. For it is this multiplicity of potential references which enables speakers to create an interactional space in negotiation.

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Periodicals

Cambio 16 13/5/91

The Guardian, 4/10/91